

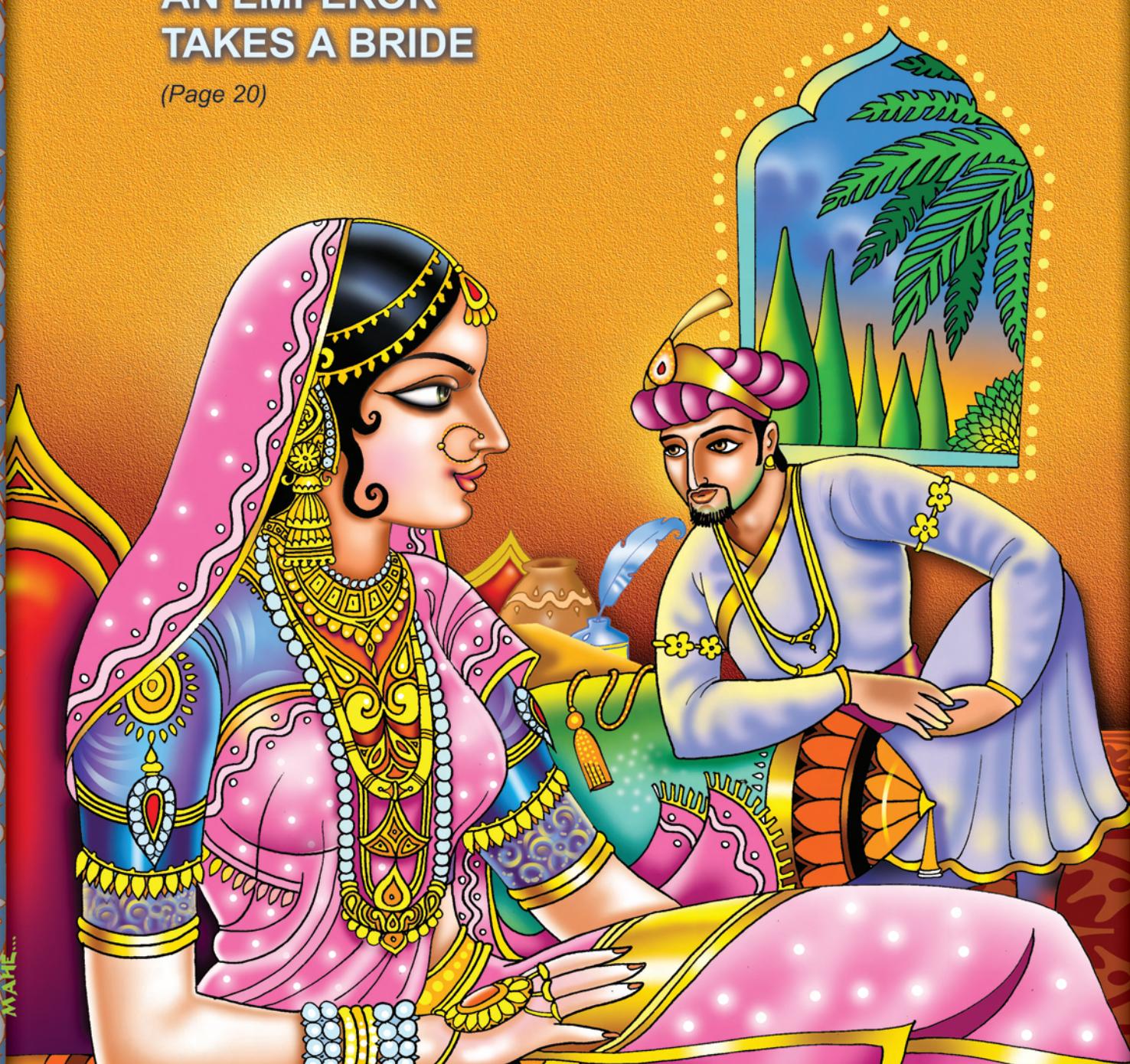
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CHANDAMAMA

AN EMPEROR
TAKES A BRIDE

(Page 20)



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- The banana is a tree. True or false?
- What sustains life? Air or water?
- The main characteristic of a bird is that it can fly. But there is one type of bird that can't fly. Which one?
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- Did you know that Greece had once upon a time banned the export of one particular fruit? Which fruit? What prompted them to take this unusual step?
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CHENNAI : SHIVAJI

Ph: 044-2231 3637 / 2234 7399
 Mobile : 98412-77347

email : advertisements@chandamama.org

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OUR PRIMARY DUTY

Voices are often raised in our Parliament demanding legislation for 'reservation' for the minority groups—religious, economic or social. The Constitution of India has its bedrock in liberty, equality and fraternity. It ensures freedom for all citizens, promises equal rights, and enjoins upon the people to live as brethren. Where should then be the need for special facilities to certain sections of people? By granting the demand for the so-called reservation, are we not throwing to the winds one of the basic principles of the Constitution?

It is not denied that certain groups of people do feel that they had remained neglected, and they had to miss opportunities to come up in life. However, examples are not wanting where individuals belonging to these groups have made their mark and risen to occupy high positions in every sphere of life by sheer dint of effort. Therefore, persistent demands for legislation to favour minorities seem unrealistic.

A more realistic picture is that of children in schools. When they sit side by side, they do not feel that their classmates are from less-privileged sections of society. Their only concern would be, who will excel in study, win more marks at exams and register success on the playground or in extra-curricular activities. This kind of positive thinking is worth emulating by the elders. Parents should ensure that nothing else changes their attitude. They should be made to think of their country first, without any kind of discrimination.

It is in this context that we recall Gandhiji's words: "I shall work for an India in which there shall be no high class or low class of people—an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony."

Chandamama has full faith in the growing generation to develop this kind of positive attitude.

God is a circle whose centre is everywhere, but
circumference nowhere. *-Empedocles*

Never think that war, no matter how necessary nor
how justified, is not a crime. *-Ernest Hemingway*

It is easier to give counsel than to endure sufferings manfully. *-Euripides*

Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to
utmost possible degree. *- Ezra Pound*

Reader Swatee Umapathy writes from Mauritius :

I am a regular reader of *Chandamama*. I like *Indiascope*, *Laugh Till you Drop*, *Fun with Phiya*, and the *Jataka Tales*. The jokes are very interesting. I began reading the magazine when I was in Standard IV; I am now in Standard VIII. Even my mother used to read every issue.

This came by e-mail from Aisiri R.Shankar :

I am 11 years old. I am a daily reader of *Chandamama*. I find the magazine excellent. The Anecdotes are great. Please include more stories from mythology, not only of India but other countries also. Could you start a pen-friends column? I have not missed any issue from 2005. I congratulate *Chandamama* for giving such an inspiration to the young citizens of our country. Good work. Please keep it up.

Reader Kiran M.Writes from Kalpakkam :

Congratulations on completing 60 years. I have been reading *Chandamama* for the last one year, and it is superb and thrilling. *Chandamama* will be more interesting if there are more comics and if it is a fortnightly.

This came by e-mail from Kumud Nath, in Botswana, South Africa:

I am an ardent lover of *Chandamama* Telugu edition, since my childhood. I would like to know whether you have brought out serials like "Mahabharatham" and "Rakasiloya" in book form.

MAIL BAG

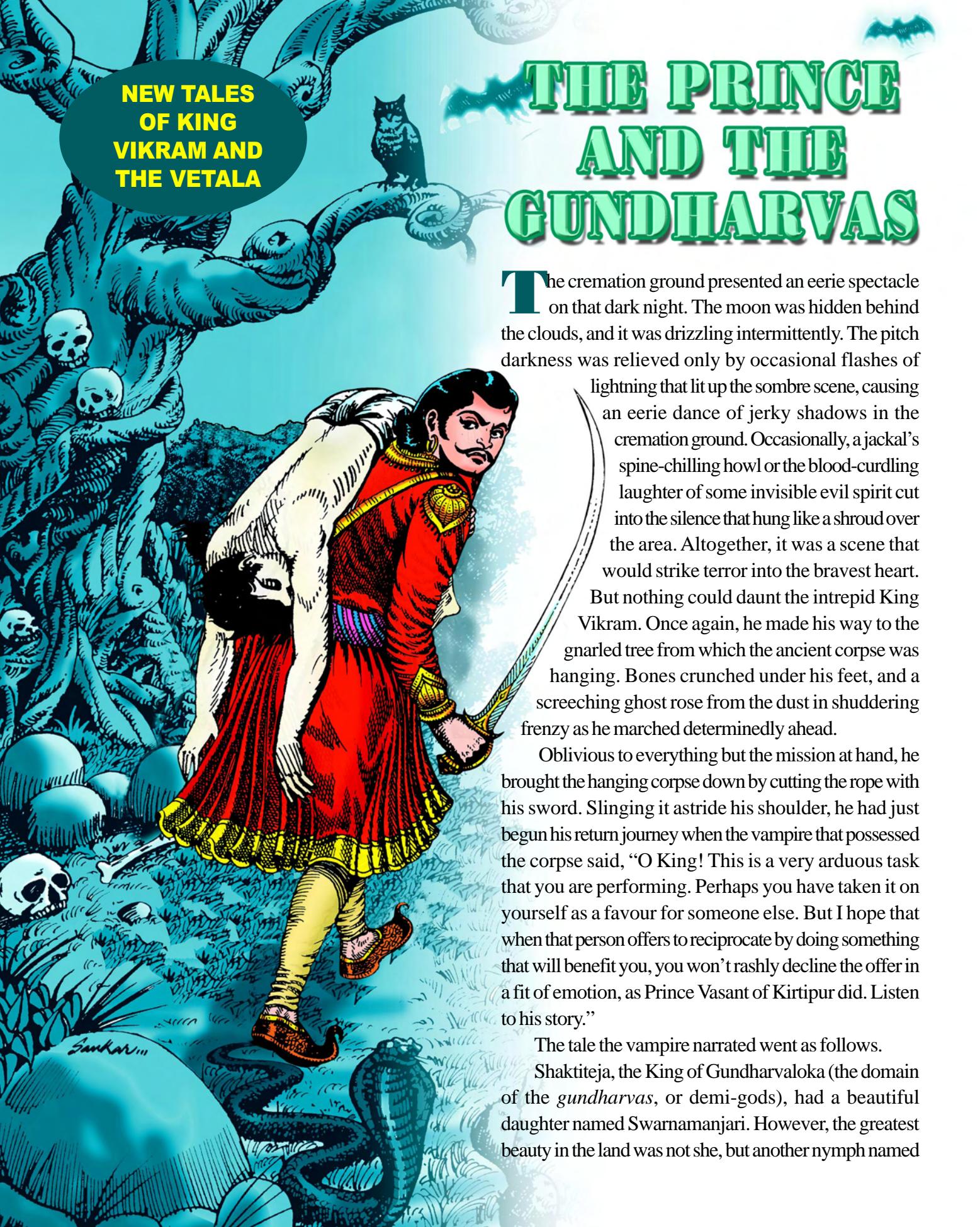
Reader Kishore K. Yalamanchili of Weston, Massachusetts, USA, has this to say :

Congratulations on the eve of *Chandamama*'s 60th birthday. One of the interesting things I recall about my childhood is reading the Telugu edition in which serials like "Shidhilayam" and "Rathiratham" and stories like Arabian Nights were interesting and kept me waiting eagerly for the next issue. I am now getting Telugu *Chandamama* here and learning new things about "Ramayana". I would like to see a special issue to celebrate the 60th birthday, just like the Silver Jubilee special issue of 1972. I recall that the special issue had some of the best stories.

Reader J.V.R. Murty of Vizianagaram has this to say :

I request you to print the magazine on white paper and black ink. The present get-up is not reader-friendly. The background colours are not helpful to read the magazine with pleasure and comfort. The earlier get-up was so pleasing.





NEW TALES
OF KING
VIKRAM AND
THE VETALA

THE PRINCE AND THE GUNDHARVAS

The cremation ground presented an eerie spectacle on that dark night. The moon was hidden behind the clouds, and it was drizzling intermittently. The pitch darkness was relieved only by occasional flashes of lightning that lit up the sombre scene, causing an eerie dance of jerky shadows in the cremation ground. Occasionally, a jackal's spine-chilling howl or the blood-curdling laughter of some invisible evil spirit cut into the silence that hung like a shroud over the area. Altogether, it was a scene that would strike terror into the bravest heart.

But nothing could daunt the intrepid King Vikram. Once again, he made his way to the gnarled tree from which the ancient corpse was hanging. Bones crunched under his feet, and a screeching ghost rose from the dust in shuddering frenzy as he marched determinedly ahead.

Oblivious to everything but the mission at hand, he brought the hanging corpse down by cutting the rope with his sword. Slinging it astride his shoulder, he had just begun his return journey when the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King! This is a very arduous task that you are performing. Perhaps you have taken it on yourself as a favour for someone else. But I hope that when that person offers to reciprocate by doing something that will benefit you, you won't rashly decline the offer in a fit of emotion, as Prince Vasant of Kirtipur did. Listen to his story."

The tale the vampire narrated went as follows.

Shaktiteja, the King of Gundharvaloka (the domain of the *gundharvas*, or demi-gods), had a beautiful daughter named Swarnamanjari. However, the greatest beauty in the land was not she, but another nymph named



Chitravarnika – a fact that caused her much heartburn. She became bitterly jealous of Chitravarnika, and was forever looking for an opportunity to hurt her in some way.

Swarnamanjari's opportunity came when her father took her on a visit to earth. She was enraptured by the earth's beauty. Back home, she lost no time in boasting to all her friends about the marvellous sights she had seen. It was not long before her stories of the earth reached Chitravarnika's ears. The vivid description caught her fancy, and filled her with a longing to visit this new place and see its wonders with her own eyes. She told her friends that she had made up her mind to leave for earth forthwith.

When King Shaktiteja heard the news from his daughter, he summoned Chitravarnika to his court and curtly announced, "Chitra, no denizen of Gundharvaloka may descend to earth without my permission. If you still insist on going, you shall forfeit all your celestial powers. However, if you are able to worship at a sacred pilgrim spot within fifteen days of reaching earth, you will regain your powers. Only then can you return to Gundharvaloka."

The king's warning did not daunt Chitravarnika; if

anything, they only strengthened her determination to make the journey.

Floating through the air, she made her descent to earth. She landed beside a beautiful brook in the midst of a forest. The crystal clear water of the brook enticed her to take a dip.

She stepped into the water and had a refreshing bath. As she emerged out of the brook and tried to soar into the air, she realised that she had lost her power to fly. The *gundharva* king's words had come true.

At this juncture, a young man came riding a horse. On seeing Chitravarnika, he reined in his horse and asked in astonishment, "Young lady, may I know who you are and what you're doing at this lonely spot? From your looks and bearing, it appears that you're no ordinary woman, but some celestial nymph."

With a sigh, Chitravarnika answered, "You're right. I'm a *gundharva* maiden. But I have lost my celestial powers, only because I committed the crime of visiting your land!" Seeing sympathy in the young man's eyes, she then told him the whole story.

The young man introduced himself. "I am Vasant, the crown-prince of Kirtipur. With a week left for my coronation, I'm currently out on a tour of my kingdom to get to know it better. I shall take you sightseeing and show you the most beautiful places on earth. In return, I'd like you to take me to Gundharvaloka. I wish to study the administrative policies there, so that I can implement them in my own kingdom when I become the ruler."

"Your aim is a lofty and commendable one indeed," praised Chitravarnika. "But O Prince, I myself have lost the power to fly back to Gundharvaloka. Unless I worship at the holiest pilgrim spot on earth within 15 days, I cannot get my power back. So how can I take you there – much as I would love to do so?"

"Why don't you try to regain your powers? I shall help you," assured Vasant.

"But which is the holiest spot on earth?" asked Chitravarnika

"The holiest destination that I can think of is Mount Kailas, abode of Lord Siva and Goddess Parvati," answered Vasant. "I can take you there."

On hearing this, Chitravarnika's eyes lit up with fresh hope and she asked, "But would we be able to make it there in just 15 days?"

"Why not? It can be done, if we leave rightaway," he replied confidently.

The twosome set out on their journey to Mount Kailas. On the way, Prince Vasant pointed out many breathtakingly beautiful sights to Chitravarnika. On the tenth day, they reached Lake Manasarovar.

It was a full-moon night. The lake, dazzling in the moonlight, presented a vision of ethereal beauty. The prince pointed out the sacred mountain peak to the nymph. Praying to Siva and Parvati with all their hearts, both of them prostrated in the direction of the peak.

The next moment, Chitravarnika was enveloped in a flash of light. She realised that she had got back her lost powers. Elated, she turned to Vasant and said, "Prince, I am eternally indebted to you for your kindness!"

At this juncture, the *gundharva* king Shaktiteja (who had been following Chitravarnika's progress through his spies) appeared there. Chitravarnika bowed to him and

respectfully said, "Your Majesty, this is Prince Vasant of Kirtipur. It is he who helped me regain my powers. In return, I've promised to take him on a visit to Gundharvaloka. May I bring him along as my guest?"

But Shaktiteja glared at her furiously and demanded, "Have you forgotten that human beings are forbidden to enter our domain?" Without waiting for an answer, he then vanished from view.

Chitravarnika heaved a deep sigh. Turning to Vasant, she said, "O Prince! You heard what our king just said. But you needn't be disheartened; I can take you to my domain in defiance of his order. No doubt, I'll have to face some hardships – but that doesn't matter. I shall take you if you wish."

But Prince Vasant promptly retorted, "After what you've said, why would I wish to see your domain? Now, even if your king himself were to change his mind and return here to personally invite me, I would decline the invitation. I'm not interested in visiting Gundharvaloka."

Chitravarnika smilingly bade him goodbye and disappeared.



Concluding the story at this point, the vampire said, “O King! Prince Vasant took the trouble to escort Chitravarnika all the way to Kailas, as a result of which she was able to regain the powers she had lost. In return for this favour, he had requested a chance to visit Gundharvaloka – again, not for his personal enjoyment, but for the noble cause of studying the methods of administration used there, with the intention of implementing them in his own domain when he became the king. Then why did he change his mind and turn down Chitravarnika’s offer of taking him there? Wasn’t it the height of foolishness to turn down this golden opportunity? Why did he do it? Was it out of fear of the *gundharva* king’s wrath? Or was it an impulsive decision spurred by hurt pride and anger? If you know the answer, speak out – otherwise, your head shall shatter into fragments!”

Calmly and unhesitatingly, King Vikram answered: “The reason Prince Vasant wished to study the administration of Gundharvaloka was because he had

considered it an exemplary domain, inhabited by ideal beings. But the *gundharva* king Shaktiteja’s unjust and unreasonable behaviour, goaded by his daughter’s jealousy, which Vasant subsequently witnessed made him understand the *gundharvas* were far from ideal. They too had the same weaknesses as human beings – perhaps to a worse degree! So, there was nothing to be learnt from their methods of administration. This, coupled with the thought that Chitravarnika would have to suffer her king’s punishment for taking him to Gundharvaloka, made him drop the idea of visiting that land. There is nothing foolish about his decision.”

On hearing this, the vampire nodded in approval, before going off into peal after peal of thunderous laughter. The next moment, he, along with the corpse, moved off the king’s shoulder with a jerk and flew back to the tree.

King Vikram gave a little sigh as he gazed upon the scene. Then, he squared his shoulders, drew his sword and retraced his steps towards the ancient tree.



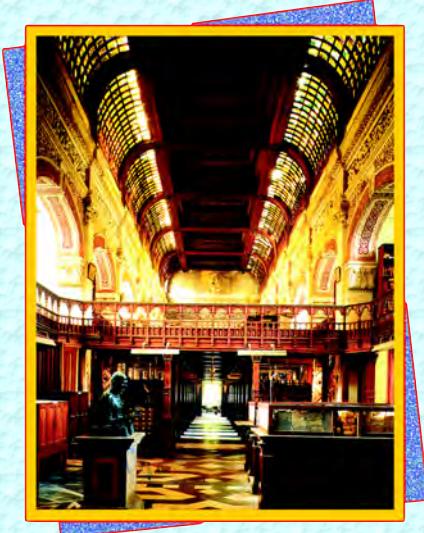
DID YOU KNOW?

The giant-sized bamboos of south-east Asian countries, like Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, grow at an amazing speed – something like 1 metre in 24 hours! The bamboos in north-east India acquire a new “ring” (the distance between two rings is less than a metre) in about 6 to 8 weeks.



IndiaScope

A LIBRARY IN A HERITAGE BUILDING

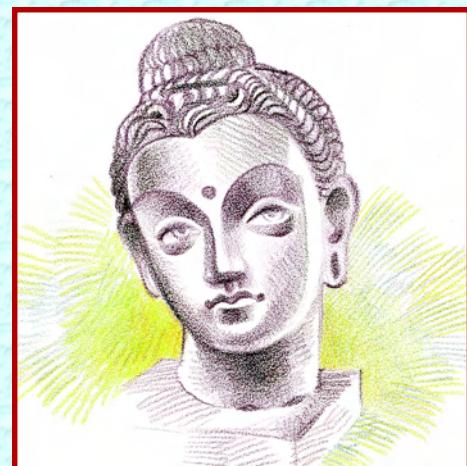


India has four national libraries which receive a copy or two of all books/magazines printed in India as per the Public Libraries Act of 1954. The Connemary Public Library in Chennai is one of them. This heritage building, which is part of the Museum Theatre complex in Egmore, is where the library is housed. Construction of the building started on March 23, 1890. The foundation stone was laid by Lord Connemara, who was the then Governor of Madras. The library was inaugurated by Governor Arthur Elibank Havelock on December 5, 1896. Built in the Indo-Saracenic style, the 110-year-old library building recently underwent wide restoration work by the Archaeological Survey of India, Chennai circle. The long hall, which is one of the main attractions in the building, is used as a reading room. The book shelves are placed on either side. The vaulted roof has glass tiles to let in as much natural light as possible. There are 13 bays of stained glass panels. The ceiling is embellished with beautiful designs. The stained glass panel bays on either side of the vaulted roofs, the stuccoed pillars and arches, and the well-preserved carved wooden balustrades made of Burmese teak are other attractions.

vaulted roof has glass tiles to let in as much natural light as possible. There are 13 bays of stained glass panels. The ceiling is embellished with beautiful designs. The stained glass panel bays on either side of the vaulted roofs, the stuccoed pillars and arches, and the well-preserved carved wooden balustrades made of Burmese teak are other attractions.

OLDEST MUSEUM

India's first and oldest museum was opened to public in 1875 in Calcutta (now Kolkata). It is a storehouse of specimens of the country's 5,000 year old heritage. It is located in a section of the building of the Asiatic Society. The main attraction is the Bharhut Room, in which relics of the Sunga dynasty (2nd century B.C.) are displayed. Bharhut is a village in Madhya Pradesh. In 1873 the remains of a Buddhist stupa were discovered there. They are some of the railings and gateway. These have been dramatically re-assembled in the museum. The railings are decorated with bas reliefs depicting both religious and secular themes. Some of the panels illustrate scenes from the Jatakas and stories from the earlier lives of the Buddha. The museum has also some of the best collections of Gandhara sculptures. Also on display are coins belonging to the 5th century B.C., and of the Gupta period and Mughal times.





From the pen of
RUSKIN BOND

THE AFTERMATH



The Town Hall itself had collapsed, burying a number of clerks and officials. By the time the powerful tremor had passed, several other large buildings had also come down.

Grandfather did not panic. He picked Mukesh off a heap of sweets and helped the dazed shopkeeper to his feet. Then he realized that the earthquake must have affected every part of the town.

"Let's get back to the house," he said. "Anything could have happened!"

Grabbing Mukesh by the hand, he started running down the road. Mukesh had trouble keeping up with him. He had never seen Grandfather running before.

Dolly was helping Grandmother hang out the washing when the tremor came. Had they been inside the house, they would not have come out alive.

As in the case of the first tremor, the dog began to howl and all the birds rose from the trees

and began circling overhead, making a great noise. Then, suddenly, there was a wind rushing through the trees, and the ground began to heave and quake. Dolly looked up to see the tall chimney toppling off the roof of the house.

"Look, Granny!" she cried. "The house is falling down! What will happen to my doll's house?"

"Never mind the doll's house," said Grandmother. "Let's get out of the building."

They ran into the garden just as the walls of the house bulged outwards and the roof fell inwards. There was a great crash, followed by clouds of dust and plaster.

Grandmother looked across the road and saw other houses collapsing, almost as though some unseen giant was blowing them all down.

There was a peculiar whistling wind, but it wasn't the wind that had done the damage; it was the quivering of the earth that had loosened bricks and plaster, beams and rafters. The air was filled with choking dust. They couldn't speak.

How flimsy all the houses seem, thought Grandmother. Just dolls' houses. And yet, many of them had stood for over a hundred years. A hundred years—and in a moment, gone!

The shaking had stopped, but already their home was a mound of rubble. A bedstead poked out of a broken window. A bathroom tap gushed water over a squashed sofa set.

Here a bit of broken desk or chair, there a bit of torn carpet, a familiar hat, battered books, a twisted

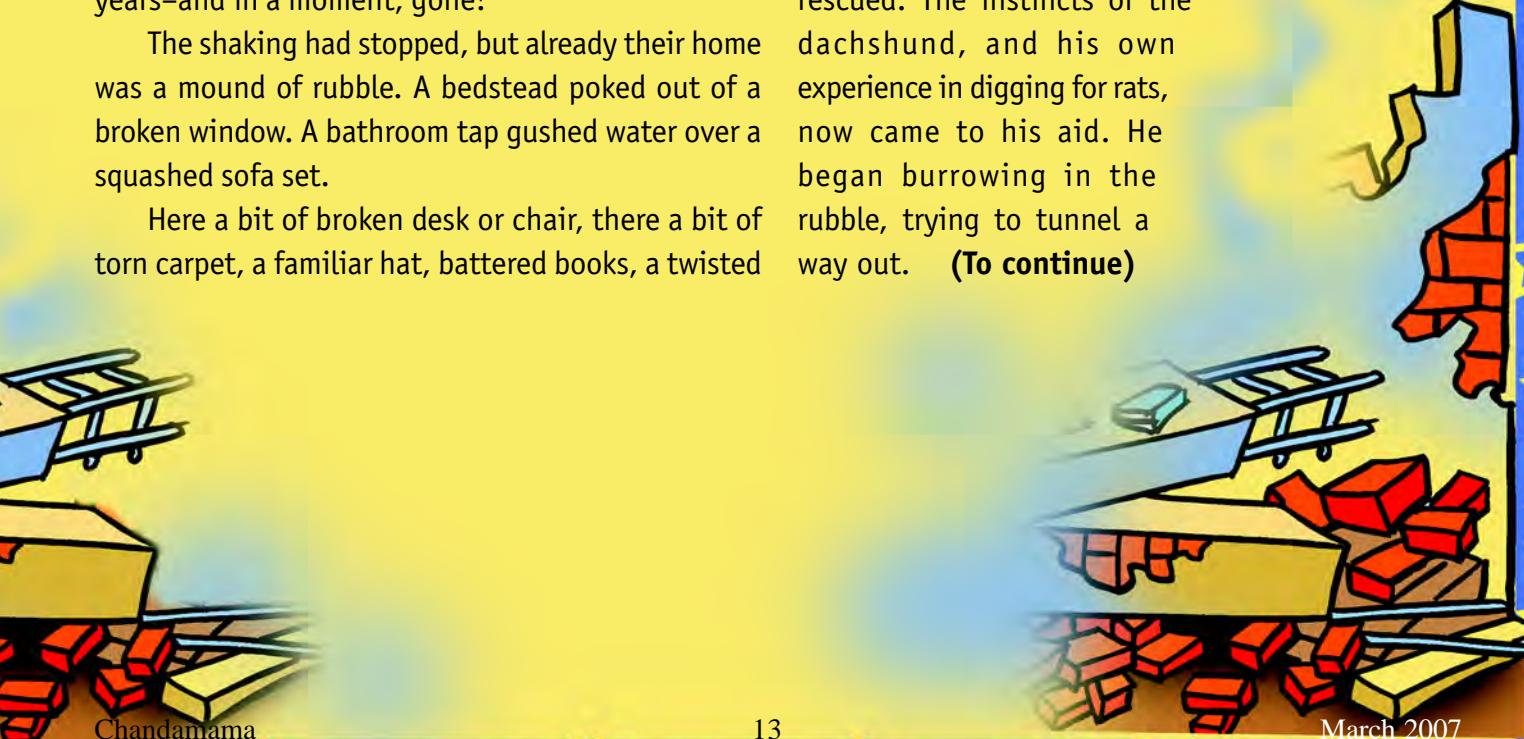
umbrella; these were the only reminders that this had once been a home.

The goat was missing, the hens had vanished. The only things that hadn't been touched were the clothes that Dolly and Grandmother had been hanging up. They remained firmly on the washing-line, flapping about in the wind.

Cries from afar came to them on the wind—cries for help, people calling out for each other, some just shouting because there was nothing else to do.

Dolly and Grandmother stood like statues in the middle of the garden. They were too shocked to move until they saw Grandfather and Mukesh running down the road towards them. Then they, too, began to run.

Pickle found himself trapped in the storeroom. He had been ferreting between two large boxes, trying to get at a terrified rat, when the ceiling came down on top of the boxes. There was dust and darkness everywhere. Pickle didn't like it one bit. He wanted to be out of that suffocating hole, and he wasn't going to sit there, waiting to be rescued. The instincts of the dachshund, and his own experience in digging for rats, now came to his aid. He began burrowing in the rubble, trying to tunnel a way out. **(To continue)**



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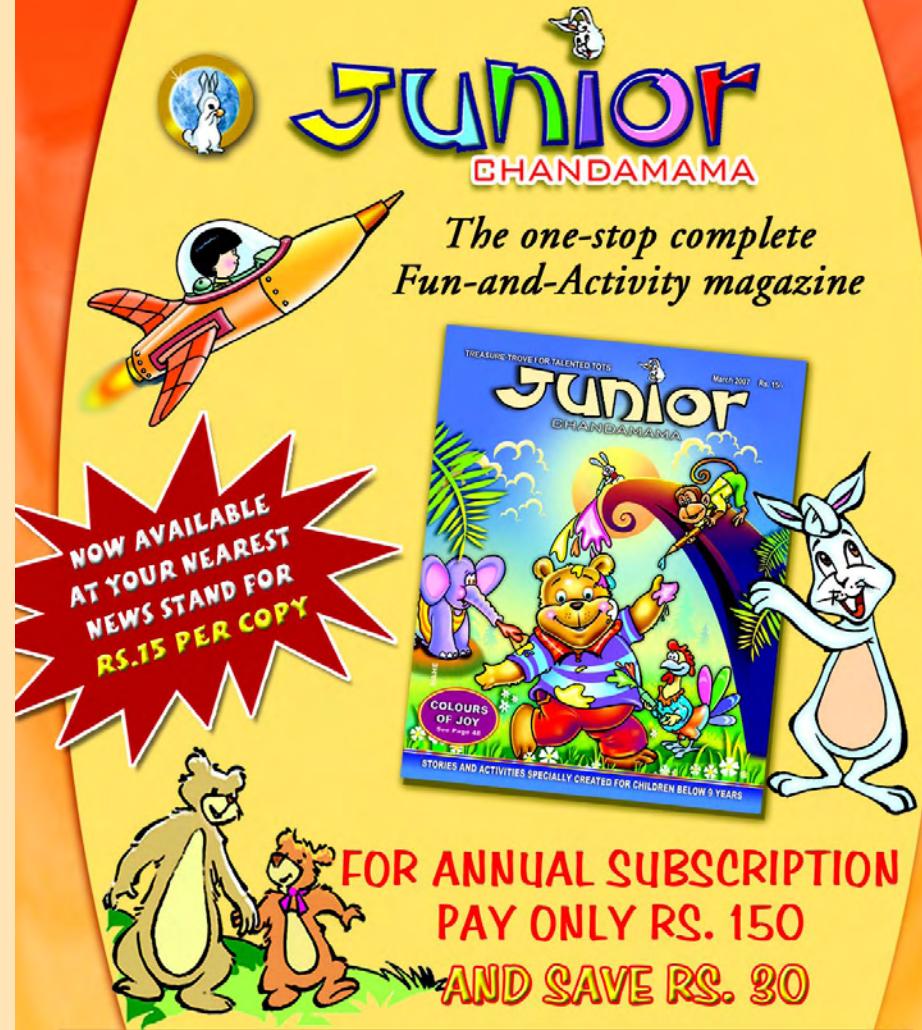
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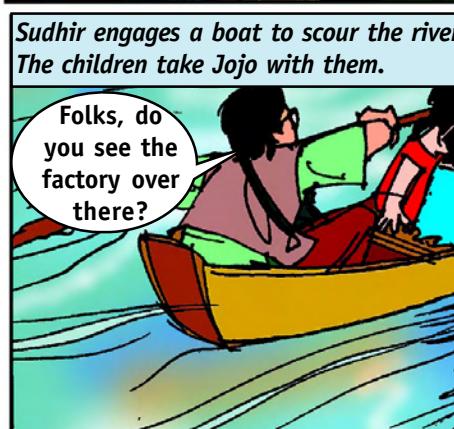
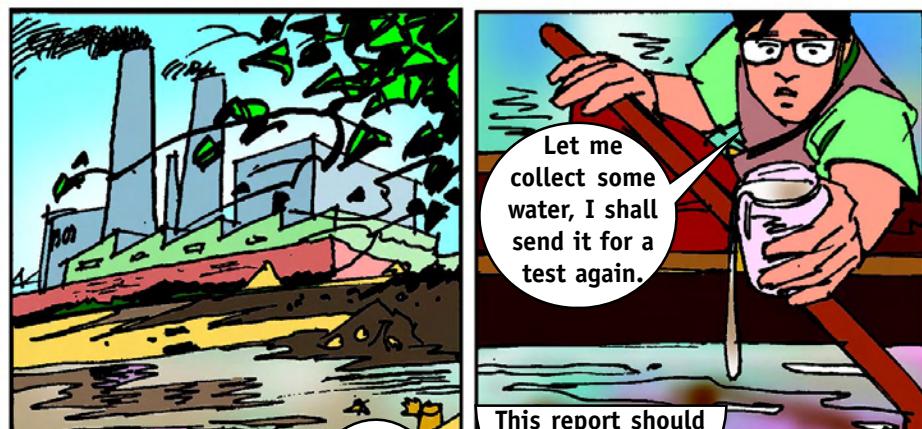
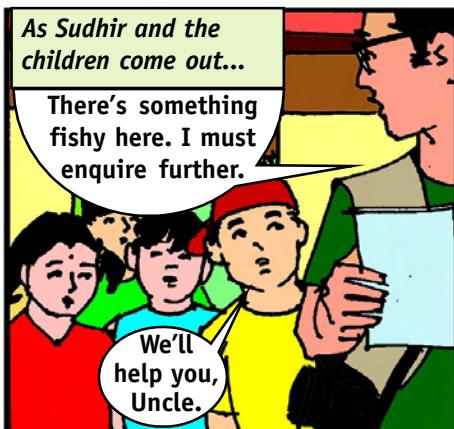
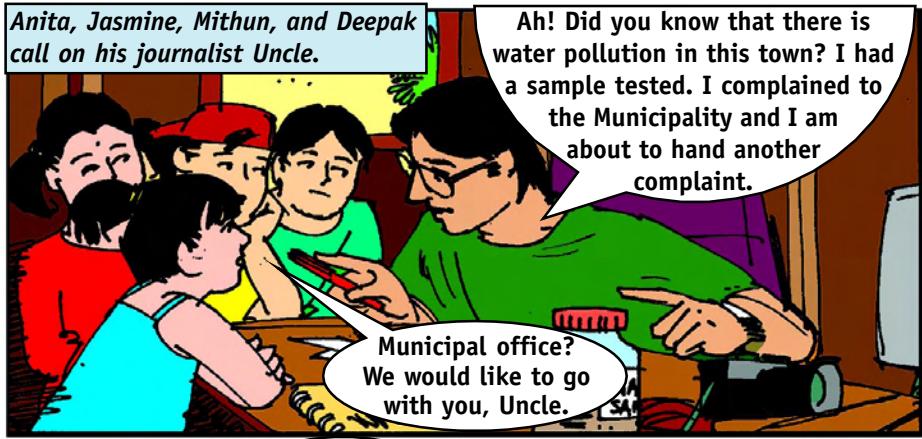
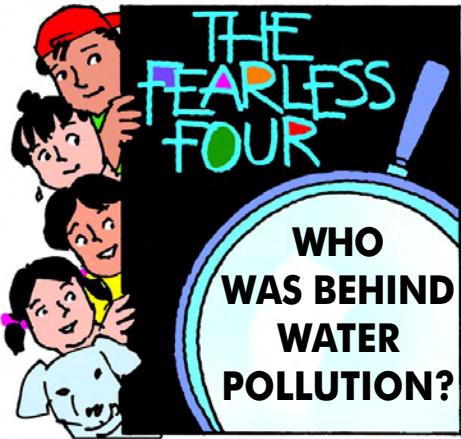
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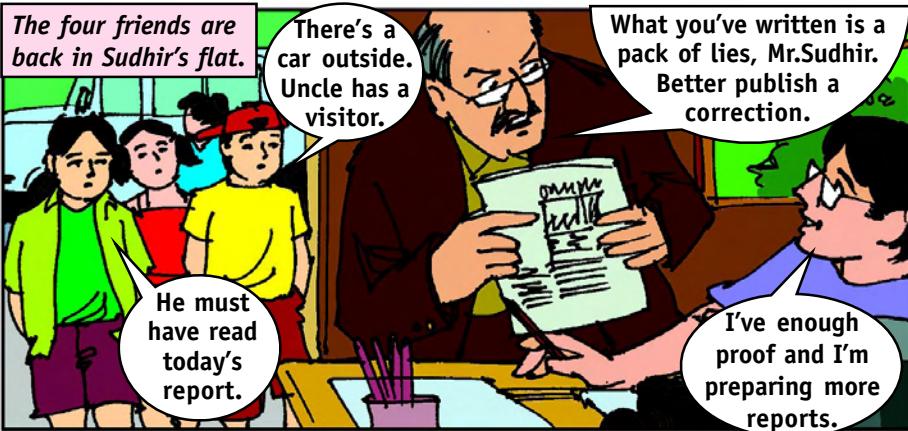
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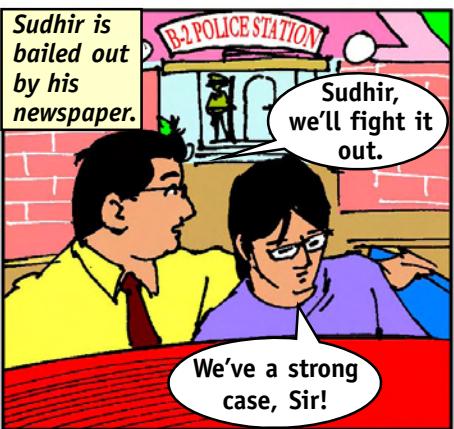
The four friends are back in Sudhir's flat.



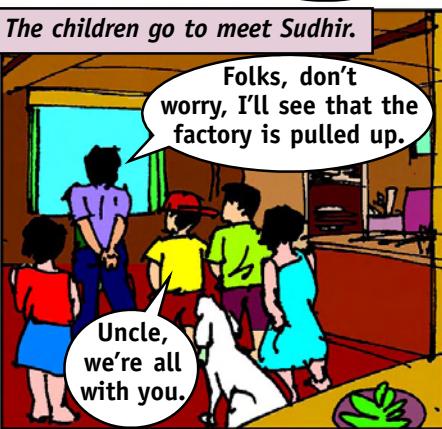
Sudhir is taken to the police station.



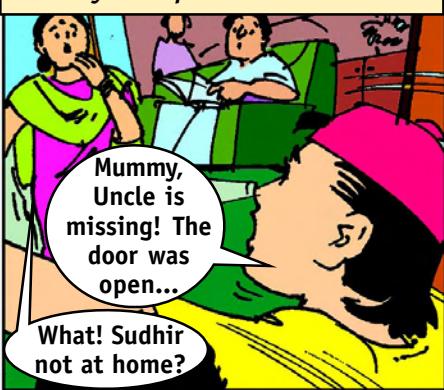
Sudhir is bailed out by his newspaper.



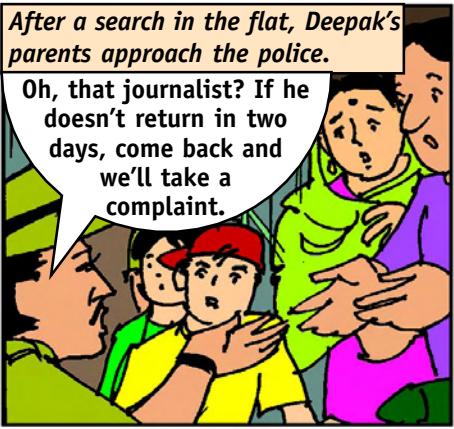
The children go to meet Sudhir.



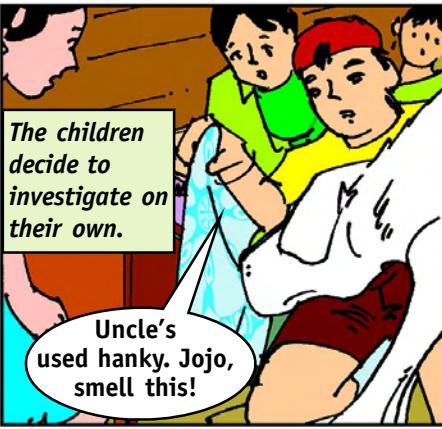
Next day... Deepak rushes home.

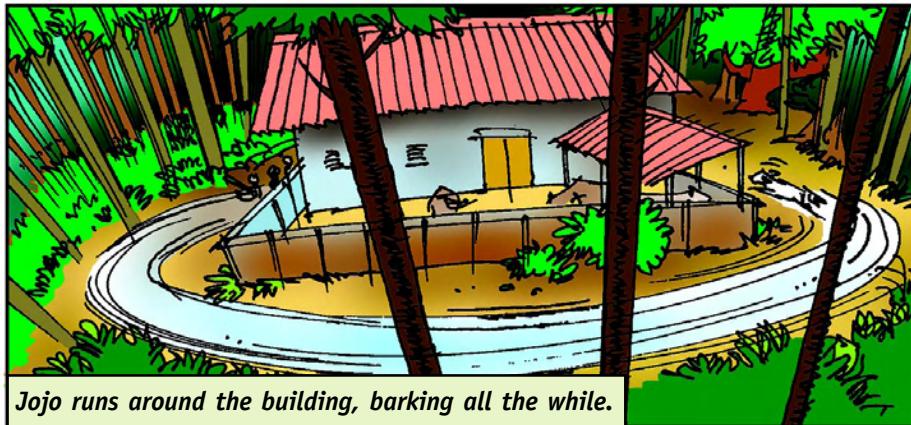
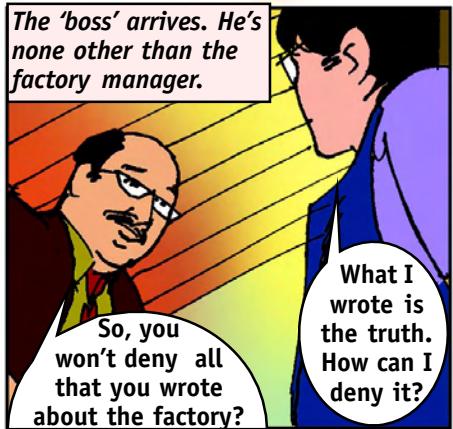
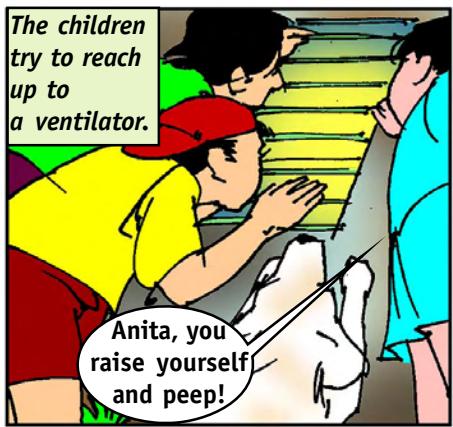


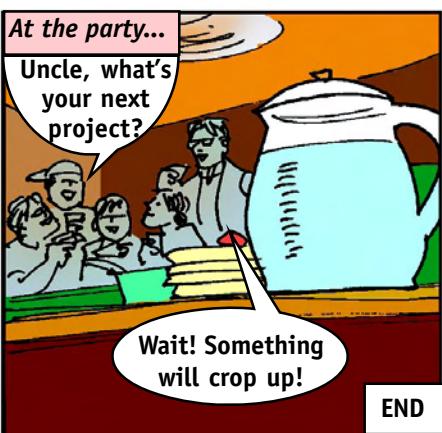
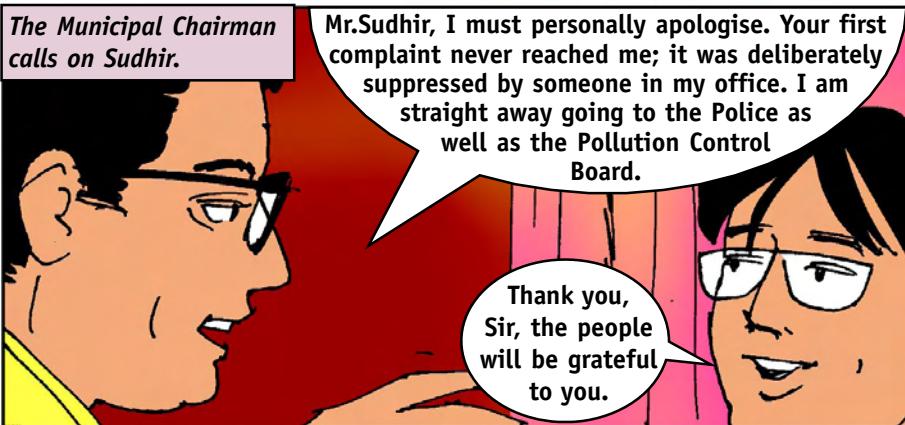
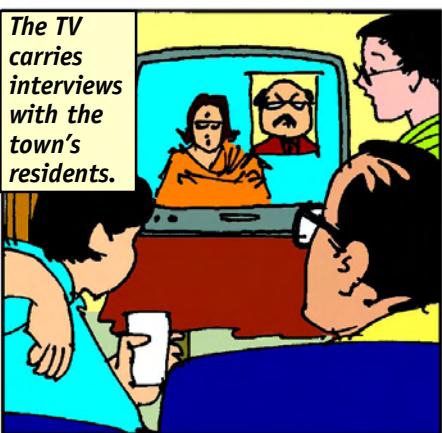
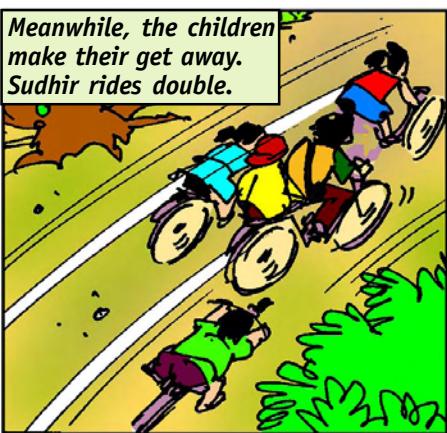
After a search in the flat, Deepak's parents approach the police.



The children decide to investigate on their own.







END

THE MONSTER OF DARKNESS

Ince a primitive tribe lived in a remote jungle in the Himalayas. They used to wake up at daybreak and go to sleep at sunset. There was a big cave near where they lived. Long ago, some of their ancestors had entered this cave, and had not come back. The tribesmen, therefore, considered the cave sacred, in the belief that their ancestors must be living inside.

One day, some of the tribesmen went up to the cave and peeped in. It was pitch dark. They wondered, was it any monster blocking their way? "Let's pray to the monster to go away," suggested one. They prostrated in front of the cave and prayed to the monster to leave the cave. But the monster did not move.

They went to the cave the next day, and the next and for several days. The monster was still there. One tribesman said, "The master seems too wicked to heed our prayers. Let's attack it!" They threw stones and shot arrows. However, the monster did not budge. The tribesmen were now at their wit's end.

One day a wise man came to the jungle. The tribesmen met him and narrated their problem. He easily guessed what was bothering them. They were ignorant of darkness and light. He wanted to help them. He said, "The monster will go away if you do as I say. Get me a long bamboo cane. At one end, tie some dry grass soaked in fat."

They did as he directed. The sage then rubbed two pieces of flint together, and lit the grass. He now asked the tribesmen to enter the cave, holding the torch aloft. Some of them doubted how much they could believe in a stranger. They wondered: how could a mere bamboo scare away the fearsome monster who had resisted their prayers as well as attack? However, when the sage prompted them, they obeyed. They entered the cave. They did not find any monster. The light from the torch made them realise that the 'monster' had gone away.

The monster was only in their imagination. They did not know what darkness was. The light from the flame removed their ignorance. It was the beginning of knowledge for them.



SANKAR.



AN EMPEROR



When a king is callous and neglects his prime duty of looking after his kingdom, more often than not it is grabbed by another. Baaz Bahadur was a good man and a talented musician. But he was an inefficient ruler and administrator. He spent all his time with his consort, Roopmati, or in composing music, and allowed the administration to go astray.

Before long, Emperor Akbar realised what was happening and felt that it was time he took matters into his own hands. He sent an army headed by Adham Khan to conquer Mandu once again. Akbar was confident that he could do it with no effort, because Baaz Bahadur had grown really lax about his responsibilities as a ruler and would not be bothered to face a proper battle. Nor did he have anyone else to do it on his behalf.

Adham Khan was keen to lead the army for yet another reason. He had heard a great deal about Roopmati, her beauty and talents as a singer and composer. He wanted to see her for himself and win her over if he could. He was sure it would not be difficult once Baaz Bahadur was out of the way.

Baaz Bahadur and Roopmati were in the pavilion composing music as usual, when the news that Adham

Khan was about to attack Mandu reached them. Roopmati was alarmed. But Baaz Bahadur paid no heed. "Adham Khan is said to be an able fighter," said Roopmati, "I think we need to be on our guard."

"Forget it," said Baaz Bahadur casually, "I don't believe he will really come here. It's just one of those casual rumours that keep cropping up."

"I don't think so, not this time," said Roopmati. "Couldn't you go and see the state of our army? Are they fit to face such a challenge?"

"Oh they are good enough!" said Baaz Bahadur easily. "They have been protecting us all this time, haven't they?"

"Yes, they have," agreed Roopmati, "but they had never faced a Mughal army before. Frankly, I don't like what I have heard of Adham Khan. He is said to be a cruel, ruthless, unprincipled man."

"Don't worry, my dear. I'll be there to protect you if he tries any tricks," said Baaz Bahadur laughing. "Now stop worrying needlessly and complete the piece of music we were composing. I want you to change the *mukhra* a little." Roopmati turned to her music once again, but she could not help feeling uneasy.

Adham Khan and his army broke upon them with the suddenness of a storm. Baaz Bahadur's soldiers, untrained and unprepared, collapsed even before the attack, like a house of cards. Roopmati took in the situation at a glance. "Be quick, my lord," she told Baaz Bahadur. "Run out through the back door before they break in. Yes, I absolutely insist. There's not a moment to lose!"

"What about you?" cried Baaz Bahadur. "I can't leave you behind!"

"I know how to protect myself and my honour. Don't worry about me. Just run for your life!" cried Roopmati and pushed him out of the back door. Baaz Bahadur ran away and saved his life. Roopmati swallowed poison which she always carried on her ring, before Adham Khan broke into the pavilion. When he rushed in, she was

TAKES A BRIDE

already dead. Mandu was annexed by the Mughals for the last time. The year was 1561.

Akbar seems to have visited Mandu four times in all. He first came in 1573 when he got to know that Adham Khan, now the firmly established ruler of Mandu, had grown too big for his boots and was actually speaking ill of Akbar. The Emperor came to Mandu to put him in his place and tell him what exactly the consequences would be if he continued to speak against him. A terrified Adham Khan realised his mistake and sought his pardon.

Akbar did not feel like going back to Agra just then. It was already very hot there. But Mandu, high up in the hills with a dense forest all around, was beautifully cool. The palaces were enticing and the flowers which bloomed in a riot all around the two beautiful tanks – Karpur Talao and Munja Talao – were a sight for the Gods. “Do stay back for a while, your majesty,” begged Adham Khan and the others. “You look tired. A rest will do you good.”

Akbar nodded in agreement. Indeed he did feel tired. But the palace was lonely. He thought of Jodha Bai in Fatehpur Sikri and sighed. But the Mughal Emperor was not obliged to have only one queen! Of course, there were others.. though not as important to him as Jodha Bai, the mother of his beloved son Jahangir.

Akbar was lost in thoughts. He sent for Mubarak Shah of Khandesh the next day. After the usual round of polite enquiries, Khandesh asked hesitantly, “Sire, did you send for me for any particular reason?”

“I did” said Akbar.

“What is it, your majesty?”

“Have you any daughters?” asked Akbar.

Mubarak Shah was astonished. “Yes, your majesty, but...”

“Old enough to be married?”

“Yes, and they are beautiful as well as talented.”

“Very well. Select one for me!”

Mubarak Shah was overjoyed. He sent one of his daughters to Mandu in the company of a wedding party and many expensive gifts. Akbar met them graciously and welcomed his bride to the beautiful city of Mandu. All the palaces were lit up and everyone shared in the unexpected celebrations. After a few days Akbar returned to Agra with his new Begum. Akbar came to Mandu again in 1592, when Prince Murad was made the governor of Malwa. During his next two visits he had the beautiful Neelkanth palace built near the Sagar lake.

Although Humayun was the one to conquer Mandu and Akbar the one to build a beautiful palace, it was Jahangir who loved Mandu most of all and spent the maximum time there. - *Swapna Dutta*



SCIENCE FAIR



- By Rosscole
Krishna Pillai

MARCH-BORN: OTTO HAHN

Hailed as the "founder of the atomic age", Otto Hahn was born on March 8, 1879 in Frankfurt-on-Main in Germany, as the youngest son of Heinrich Hahn, a prosperous entrepreneur. Even as a young student, with his special aptitude for chemistry, Otto Hahn carried out experiments in a small laboratory in his house. Later, he took up chemistry and mineralogy at the University of Marburg. He was only 21 when he got a doctorate in organic chemistry. He worked as assistant to Prof. Zincke in the Chemical Institute at Marburg.

In 1904 Hahn went to London. While working on radiochemistry under Sir William Ramsay, he discovered a new radioactive substance, which he called radiothorium (thorium 228). Next year he went to Montreal, Canada, where he carried out research under Prof. Ernest Rutherford at the McGill University. He discovered three new radioactive elements; he called them thorium C, radium D, and radioactinium.

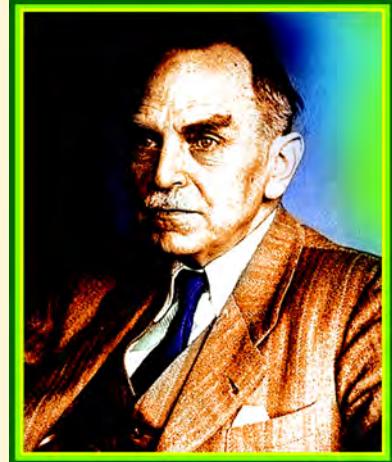
Later, on returning to Germany, in collaboration with Emil Fischer at the University of Berlin, he discovered mesothorium I (now known as radium 228 used in medical radiation treatment) and mesothorium II. In 1907, he became a lecturer at the University of Berlin; then began his historic 30-year collaboration with Ms. Lise Meitner, a young Austrian physicist, who had moved from Vienna to Berlin. Together they discovered a new element, (atomic number 91) named protactinium.

Hahn was made Professor when he was 31; two years later, he became the head of the Radioactivity Department of the newly-founded Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Chemistry in Berlin. He was its Director for 18 years from 1928. During World War I, Otto Hahn had to serve the German army. In 1916, he went back to his Institute to continue radiochemical research. Hahn's most momentous work was done in collaboration with Ms. Lise Meitner and his assistant, Fritz Strassmann, in bombarding the heaviest element uranium with neutrons. On December 17, 1938 Hahn and Strassmann found traces of the lighter element, barium, in the uranium sample bombarded with neutrons. Hahn concluded that the uranium nucleus had split into atomic nuclei of lighter elements and called the process the "splitting of uranium". Otto Hahn was awarded the 1944 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for this historic discovery, which became well-known as "nuclear fission".

During the War, he was interned by the British when, in 1945, he learned of the dropping of the atom bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He described it as a terrible crime. He felt that as the discoverer of nuclear fission, he too was in a way responsible for this greatest of all tragedies.

After his release and return to Germany in 1946, Otto Hahn founded the Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science. He was elected member by 45 Academies including the Indian Academy of Sciences and by esteemed scientific societies including the Royal Society of London.

Otto Hahn (89) died on February 28, 1968 in Göttingen.



RECOVERY OF SATELLITE

India took the first successful step towards sending a man into space and bringing him back when the country's space agency, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), triumphed in recovering the cone-shaped Space Capsule Recovery Experiment (SRE-1). It was one of the four satellites carried into space and placed in orbit by ISRO's four-stage Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C7, launched from Sriharikota on January 10, 2007. The 550 kg satellite capsule, after successfully completing all its assigned science experiments in microgravity while orbiting in space for 11 days, plunged into the Earth's atmosphere at a velocity of 29,000 km an hour and withstood 1400-2000 degrees Celsius. Its parachutes then opened one after another and decelerated it to 43 km/hr when it was 5 km above the Earth's surface. Then, at the chosen time of 9.44 a.m. on January 22, the capsule gently splashed down in the Bay of Bengal, about 140 km east of Sriharikota, and started floating.

With this remarkably precise re-entry and recovery of the satellite, described as "a historic and thrilling moment for ISRO" by its chairman G. Madhavan Nair, India has joined the select band of nations with this rare capability, the others being Russia, the U.S.A. and China. This will enable the country to work towards building a reusable launch vehicle (RLV), which is absolutely essential for sending a man into space and enabling him to return to Earth safely. This will also be a boost to the proposed launch in 2008 of Chandrayan-1, the moon mission.

ANECDOTES

Einstein's driver used to regularly listen to his lectures sitting at the back of the hall where the scientist would be speaking. After listening to a number of his lectures very attentively, the driver one day told Einstein that he could probably give a lecture himself. It is said that at the next lecture, Einstein sat at the back of the hall in a driver's uniform, while his driver gave the lecture without any flaw. A member of the audience then got up and asked a detailed question; the 'lecturer', pointing to Einstein, very coolly, replied: "Well, the answer to that question is so simple that, I bet, my driver, sitting over there, can answer it..."

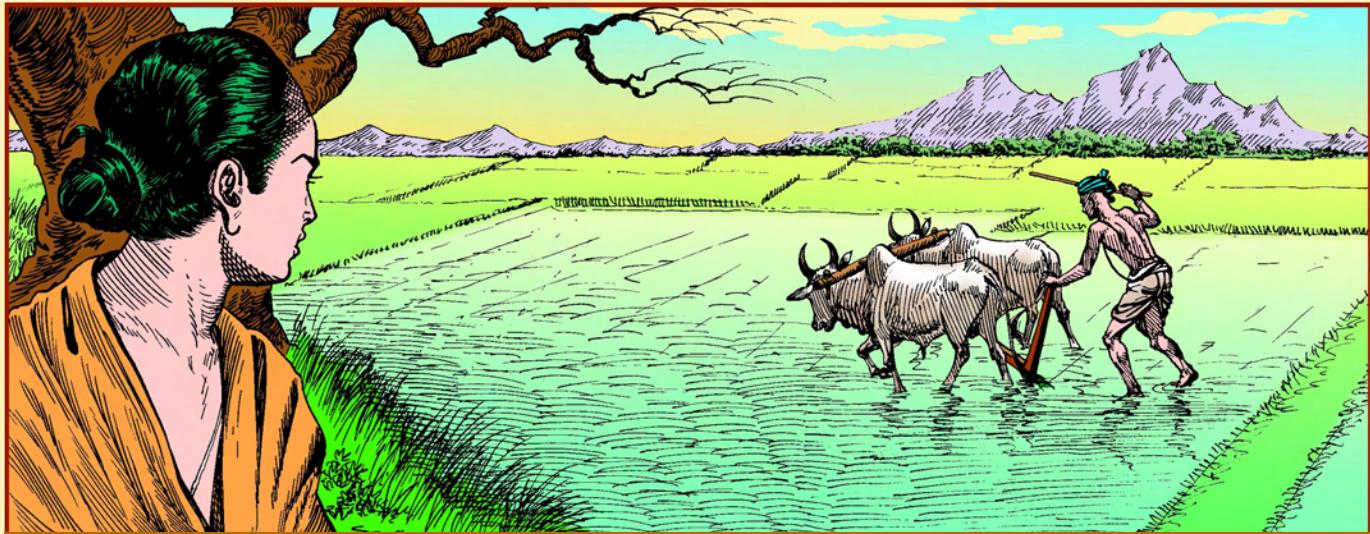


SCIENCE QUIZ

1. What is the force of attraction exerted by the Earth on a body called?
a. weak force; b. strong force;
c. gravity; d. electromagnetic force.
2. What is the chemical nature of insulin?
a. protein; b. carbohydrate; c. steroid; d. lipid.
3. Which energy-generating plant does not get energy directly from nature?
a. solar cooker; b. nuclear power plant; c. wind mill; d. wave energy generator.
4. Which of the following is not an electromagnetic radiation?
a. light; b. X-rays; c. ultrasound;
d. ultraviolet rays.
5. Who first conceived the idea of a hydrogen bomb?
a. Albert Einstein; b. Edward Teller; c. Niels Bohr;
d. Richard Feynman.



ANSWER: 1. c. gravity, 2. a. protein, 3. b. nuclear power plant, 4. c. ultrasound, 5. b. Edward Teller.



THE NEEDY

While Brahmadutta ruled Benares, Bodhisattva was born to a poor Brahmin. He was named Somadutt. His father cultivated the small bit of land which he possessed and somehow maintained his family.

When Somadutt came of age, his heart was filled with pity for his aged father who broke his back working on the land from morning till night. In order to bring happiness to his father, he thought of acquiring education and securing employment. He could have, of course, shared his father's drudgery, but that would not have added to the income since the land was very small. So, he told his father, "Let me go to Takshasila and acquire learning."

Somadutt went to Takshasila and studied under a guru. After completing his studies, he returned home. His father was still labouring on the land with the help of a couple of bullocks. He could not bear to see this state of affairs even for a moment. The very next day he proceeded to Benares and found employment in the king's Court. Soon afterwards, one of the bullocks died, and Somadutt's father became helpless. The

animal was supporting him and now it was no more. He thought of his educated son in the king's Court. Surely, he could get a bullock gifted by the king. The old man went to Benares and met his son.

"O father," Somadutt said, "you're too old to toil; so is mother. Why don't you both come and stay with me? You'll be comfortable."

"No, son," the old man replied, "I've all along lived on that bit of land, and I intent to die there. Get me a bullock, and I shall live happily, cultivating my land. I won't be happy here."

Now, Somadutt had been in employment in the Court only for a short time. He had not set aside enough income to buy a bullock for his father. And he felt delicate to ask for a gift from the king; he might take him to be a greedy man.

"Father," he said, "if I ask the king for a bullock, he might ask me why I want it, for whom I want it, and so on. In any case, it is not fit for an employee of the Court to beg for favours. You don't have such limitations. Tell the king what happened and plead for the gift of a bullock. He may not deny you."

A JATAKA TALE

The 'gem clip' – a little clip with rounded edges, used to hold papers together – is a most useful device, and all of us must have made use of it at some time or other. But do you know how it got its name? It was Great Britain's Gem Manufacturing Company that first began producing this clip in the 1890's. The company did not patent the pattern of these clips, and their design is thus freely available to millions of manufacturers the world over.



"Son, I'm a villager. I don't know anything other than driving the plough," said the old man. "How can I enter the king's Court, face his majesty, and ask him something? I'd die of fright, first. I don't even know how to word a request. So don't put me to all this trouble. Ask the king yourself."

"Then," said Somadutt, "I'll make the task easy for you. I shall write out a verse. Get it by heart and recite it before the king. He'll give you what you want."

The old man agreed to this arrangement. Somadutt wrote the following and gave it to his father: ("O King, I used to have two bullocks. I was tilling the land with their help. Now one of them is dead. So, O King, give me another.")

With great difficulty the old man got the verse by heart, with his son's help.

Then Somadutt took him to the Court along with him. As per his son's instructions, the old man folded his hands before the king as well as the ministers, and stood expectantly.

"Who are you?" the king asked him. "What

do you desire?" At once the old man began to recite the verse, which he had got from his son. But in his confusion he made a mistake while reciting the lines!

Instead of saying, "Give me another bullock", the old man said, "Take the other bullock".

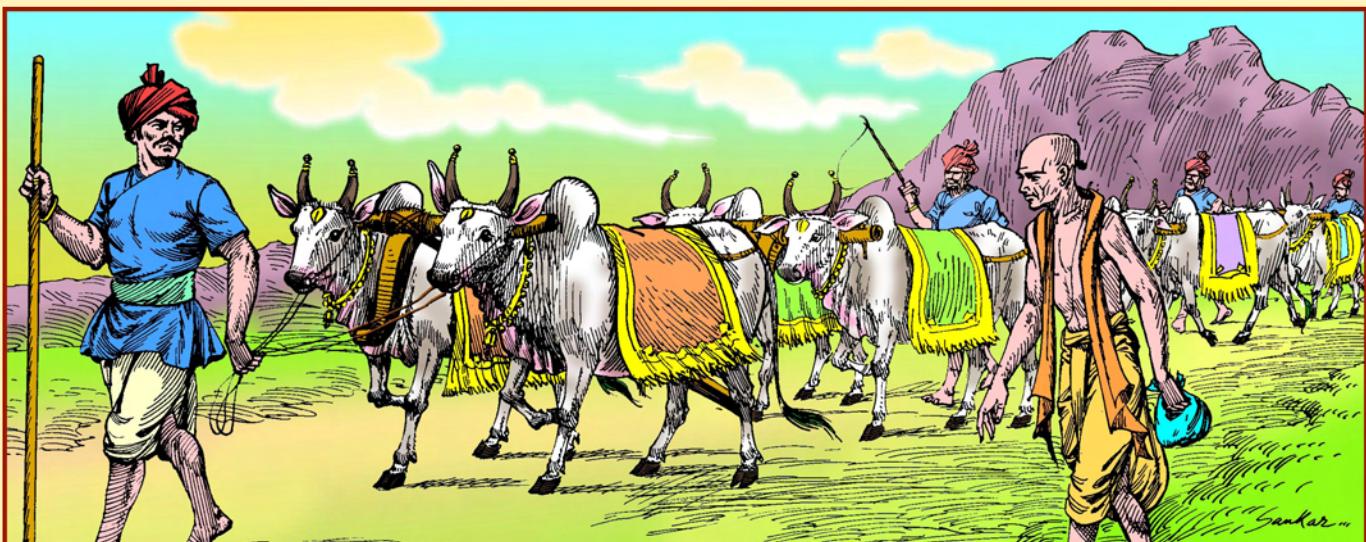
Everyone burst out laughing. Somadutt hung his head in shame.

"Is it to offer me your second bullock that you've come all the way here?" the king jokingly asked the old man.

"Yes, your majesty," the old man replied boldly. "It has given me enough trouble already." He then narrated all that had taken place.

The king was most pleased with the behaviour of Somadutt. Every employee in the Court was in the habit of seeking petty favours from the king under some pretext or other.

But even in dire need, Somadutt would not do that. The king ordered that eight pairs of oxen be dressed and decorated. He then gifted them to the old man.





STORY OF KRISHNA

(BEGINNING OF A NEW SERIAL)

Long long ago, Mathura on the banks of the river Yamuna was a charming city. Lush green groves surrounded its temples, choultries and the homes of its happy citizens while the ever-sweet river and several lakes kept its air pleasantly cool.

It was an old old habitation going back to the time of a mighty king, Madhu, who founded it and from whom it derived its name. Madhu hailed from the genre of Asuras or Titans. The Asuras had the strength and valour of giants, but they were arrogant and selfish. They mercilessly crushed others for their own satisfaction or pleasure and even when they had everything to make them happy, would crave for more.

They would forcibly take possession of all that was good and beautiful, but would never care to be good and beautiful themselves.

There were, of course, exceptions among them.

Some of them – though very few – were known for their humility, compassion and even love of God.

Madhu belonged to this rare category. He was a devotee of Lord Shiva. Pleased with him, the great God gave him a trident that had a strange quality. When hurled at an adversary, it destroyed the target and returned to its master on its own. Lord Shiva, however, had cautioned Madhu that the weapon would be effective only when used against the wicked and not against the pious or the innocent. With such a wonderful weapon at his disposal, Madhu could keep his rivals, belonging to his own tribe, at bay and rule his kingdom in peace.

When young, he had kidnapped and married an Asura princess named Kumbhinasi, a cousin of Ravana, the monarch of Lanka, the villain of the great epic *Ramayana*. Ravana marched upon Mathura, determined to destroy it and kill Madhu. But Kumbhinasi rushed out

of Madhu's fort and fell at Ravana's feet and pacified him. Realising that his sweet cousin had really set her heart upon her kidnapper, he let them live in peace. By and by Madhu and Ravana became good friends.

Ravana's marvellous fort-city on Mount Trikut, planned and built by Viswakarma, the designer and builder belonging to heaven,



1. A PROCESSION AND A PROPHECY

might have inspired Madhu to build a similar city for himself. Once the construction was completed, bards and minstrels sang its glory, and people from far and near came to have a look at it. As it was founded by Madhu, the new city was called Madhupuri. In course of time Madhupuri was shortened to Mathura.

Years passed and the rule of the Asuras over Mathura came to an end. A righteous ruler, Ugrasena, was on the throne and his subjects were a happy lot.

It so happened that once, while his queen was enjoying a stroll through a lovely narrow valley, all alone, the spirit of a titan entered her and was born to her as a son. Named Kamsa, he was rude, arrogant, and a cruel prince. Worse was to follow. He married the two daughters of Jarasandha, a tyrant who ruled over the kingdom of Magadha. The ambitious Kamsa was eager to be crowned as the king at the earliest. With his father-in-law's help he threw his parents into a lonely nook of the palace to live as prisoners. He then proclaimed himself the monarch of Mathura.

Alas, that was an era when men were oppressed by several tyrants here and there. Injustice, falsehood and cruelty were the rule of the day and whoever had the might, thought that he was always right. Kamsa personified these evil traits. He defied and ridiculed the sages who, out of their goodwill for him and his people, advised him to mend his ways; he tortured and killed whoever had the courage to criticize his conduct.

While King Ugrasena and his queen shed tears in the desolation of their prison, the ministers and nobles kept their mouths shut out of sheer fear. Only the sages were keen to put an end to Kamsa's tyranny. They meditated on Lord Vishnu and prayed for His intervention. A time came when they felt sure that their prayers had not gone unheard.

The pompous and haughty Kamsa, however had his occasional jolly moods.

His cousin, Princess Devaki, was getting married to Vasudeva, a scion of the Yadavas, a dynasty named after the illustrious prince, Yadu. Vasudeva's family had settled down in Mathura. After the wedding, the bride and the bridegroom, seated in a bejeweled open chariot bedecked



with flowers, were on their way to the latter's abode. At the head of the procession were the priests, followed by the members of nobility, the kinsmen of the two families, and musicians. Behind the chariot walked the citizens and another group of musicians. Friends of the bridegroom and the maids of the bride walked flanking the chariot. From housetops flowers were strewn and perfumes sprinkled on the couple as well as the procession.

Suddenly, a smiling Kamsa jumped onto the chariot and took over the reins of the horses from the charioteer. This was indeed a gesture of love and affection for his cousin. At least for once Kamsa was admired by all. Words of praise were uttered aloud and Kamsa felt elated. He acknowledged the people's greetings by pulling the reins in style so that the horses trotted forward in a new rhythm. A joyous applause greeted him.

But something most unexpected and undreamt of happened. Like a bolt from the blue a voice from the celestial spheres louder than the applause and shouts of the crowd came tearing through the clouds. It said, "Kamsa, the day when the earth shall be relieved of the tyrant that you are is not far! The eighth issue of the very

sister you are escorting so cheerfully shall be the one to slay you, putting an end to the misery of the innocent!"

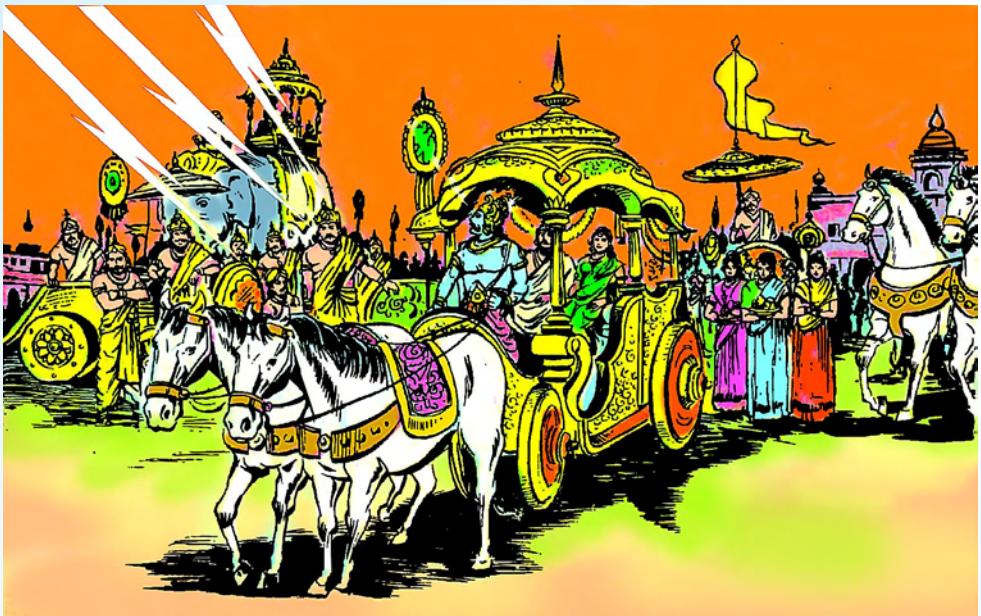
The procession had come to a halt as soon as the resounding voice had begun to descend. Everybody looked agape and upward, thunderstruck. The sky was growing overcast with dark clouds, as if in keeping with the spirit of the grim prophecy.

The lull ended with a furious cry rising from the chariot, obviously meant to meet the voice from above. It was Kamsa's. He was looking terrible, his blood-shot eyes flashing like flames of will-o'-the-wisp.

He let go the reins. While the people looked on helpless, he unsheathed his sword at the speed of lightning and, turning back, took hold of Devaki's hair.

"What are you up to, my brother?" Devaki shrieked in horror. But her cry was met by a devilish sneer.

"Eighth issue, eh? Haha!" Kamsa roared and laughed



wildly. "Must I prove a fool to wait till the birth of even your first child? Here and now I will render the prophecy futile. I must destroy the very source from which my destruction could come, if at all! Devaki, my sister, I'm sorry, but I cannot let you, the supposed harbinger of my death, live!"

Kamsa unsheathed and raised his glistening sword. It dazzled in a sinister hue under a flash of lightning.

(To continue)



A bushy moustache that droops down over the upper lip is often referred to as a 'walrus moustache', after the sea creature who sports such a moustache. The moustache for the walrus, however, is not a mere ornament but plays a vital role in the animal's life. The walrus uses its moustache, which contains about 700 hairs, to feel its way around in murky water. The hairs may also be used as forks to hold shellfish in place while the walrus sucks out the soft insides.

DID YOU KNOW?

If there were a prize for speedy mountain-climbing, it would go to the chamois, a mountain goat living in the Pyrenees and the Alps in Europe. It takes the chamois just 15 minutes to climb to a height of 3,280 ft! Climbing at this rate, it could scale Mount Everest, the highest peak on earth, in just over two hours.



LAUGH TILL YOU DROP!

Humor is a serious thing. I like to think of it as one of our earliest natural resources, which must be preserved at all cost.

-James Thurber



One day three-year-old Roshini and her mom were running errands. Everything

the mom said or did, Roshini asked, "Why?" Finally, mom said, "Lauren, please stop asking me why." After a short silence, she looked at her and asked, "Okay, how come?"



Two men are walking in the woods one-day and one falls down on the ground looking dead. Immediately, the other man rings up the police and explains what had happened. The policeman says to him, "You have to make sure he is dead, otherwise there would not be much point ringing me." So the man picks up a gun and shoots the guy lying on the floor and says, "Right, I've now made sure he is dead."

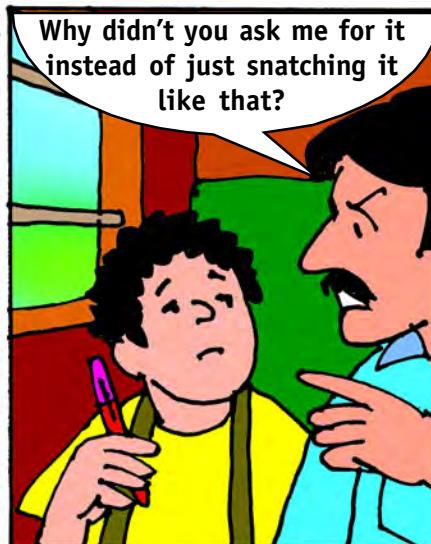
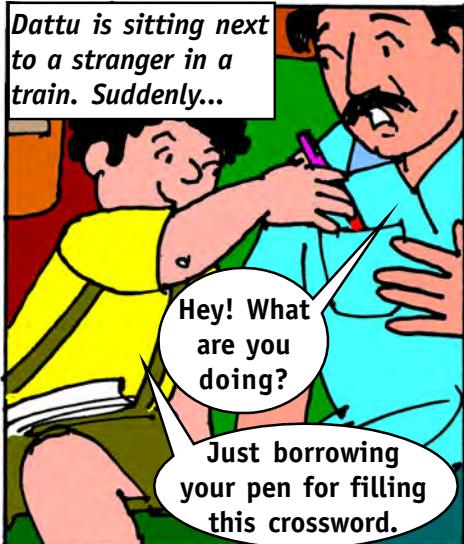
Four-year-old Rohan was riding with his dad when he spotted a flock of geese flying overhead. He asked Rohan to look out of the window, so he could see how the geese formed the letter V. The boy looked up, then asked, "Do the geese know the rest of the alphabet too?"



"It's clear," said the teacher, "that you haven't studied your geography. What's your excuse?" "Well, my dad says the world is changing every day. So I decided to wait until it settles down!"

DUSHTU DATTU

Dattu is sitting next to a stranger in a train. Suddenly...





AWARD FOR A PHILANTHROPIST

It was a tradition with the citizens of Marungapuri kingdom to celebrate King Giridhar Varma's birthday in a grand manner. Each and every citizen would contribute his mite towards the expenses and participate joyously. In turn, the king used to honour many from the public for various acts of excellence.

During a particular year, the king wanted to add one more category to the list of awards for someone who had strived hard for the upliftment of the downtrodden. He asked his minister to bring him a list of persons.

When the minister presented a list, the king was the least impressed on seeing the names. He said, "They are all rich men who have donated monies for the sake of their own publicity. Moreover, I don't approve of such charity which only makes the poor lazy. I am looking for someone who, by his relentless efforts, has helped the poor to stand on their own legs."

One day, the king was on a routine tour of the countryside to survey the condition of the villagers. In one village, which he had not visited lately, he was surprised to see an ashram. He got down from his horse and went in. He was

surprised. He saw many handicapped persons, some lame, some blind, and the others having some physical defect or other. However, all were employed gainfully in making various handicraft items. The king could never imagine that in a remote village of his kingdom such a wonderful scheme of rehabilitation of handicapped persons was in existence. He was eager to meet the philanthropist who had undertaken the noble mission. Soon, a young man with a pleasant face walked in. He recognized the king and warmly welcomed him.

The king said: "I was looking for someone who is working for the welfare of the poor and the downtrodden in society. I wish to honour him on my birthday. I invite you to the capital to receive the award."

The young man smiled and said humbly: "Sire! Let me tell you a story, after hearing which you may make a decision."

Krishna Shastri was a young man of village Koviloor. He was hailed as a great scholar. He had a flair for poetry. When the Zamindar of Mayapuri announced a poetry contest, he decided to attend it. He set out from his village on a

horse cart for Mayapuri. On the way, he rested under a greenwood tree. Soon, a man came there limping and he, too, took shelter under the same tree. He appeared to be an illiterate. He said he was going to Mayapuri to attend the poetry contest. Shastri wondered how an illiterate could relish a contest which was meant for only scholars like him. Shastri offered to take the man in his cart. He turned down the offer politely and preferred to walk the distance.

Shastri reached the Zamindar's residence and took part in the contest. He was sure he would win. While the contest was in progress, the Zamindar's family physician Vaidyanath entered, accompanied by a man. Shastri was surprised to find that he was none other than the lame whom he had met on the way.

Vaidyanath introduced him to the Zamindar: "This is one of my patients, Jagannath. While I was handing him medicines, he said he was in a hurry to attend the contest. I asked him jokingly whether he knew anything about poetry. He surprised me by rendering a verse on me:

'Physicians prescribe only medicines. But Vaidyanathji offers something special, which not only cures, but makes the patients immune against all diseases in future. What he offers can be compared to the divine ambrosia!'

I was so much impressed by his talent that I thought he should not merely attend the contest, but participate in it."

The Zamindar welcomed Jagannath and requested him to recite a verse. Words flowed spontaneously from his mouth: *"Ignorant people do penance to attain salvation and enter the heavens little realizing that there is a paradise on earth, at Mayapuri. And no penance is needed to enter this paradise because here dwells the guardian angel, the Zamindar of Mayapuri."* The zamindar was carried away by his eloquence, and declared him the winner.

It was a shock for Shastri. He could never



guess that the poor, illiterate man was capable of rendering poems of such high quality. "I'm sorry that I looked down on you earlier without knowing your hidden talent. It'll be my privilege to take you back in my cart."

Jagannath turned down the offer again. "There are many disabled persons like me with hidden talents who are struggling for survival. With the award money, I propose to organize a scheme to rehabilitate more such unfortunate persons. I shall be obliged if you help me in my endeavour." Shastri readily agreed.

The young man concluded his story and told the king: "Sire! The result is what you see here. I'm the Krishna Shastri of the story. Jagannath, who inspired me to do all this, is the man who deserves the award for a true philanthropist. I shall be pleased if you select him for the award."

The king said, "In my opinion, both of you deserve to be honoured. I shall institute two awards. Kindly bring your mentor also along with you." The king was now a contented man.

SUNITA IN SPACEWALK

America-born astronaut of Indian origin Sunita Williams has by now walked in space for 29 hours 17 minutes in all, creating a new record for any space woman. She emerged from the International Space Station (ISS) for the fourth time on Feb. 8, along with Commander Michael Lopez-Alonso and spent 6 hours 40 minutes. They spent that time repairing the electrical system needed for any docking vehicle. Earlier, on Feb. 4, both 'Suni' and Michael spent more than 7 hours attending to an ammonia leak. When the ammonia gets outside, the fluid turns into flakes in vacuum space. Fortunately, the flakes did not affect the two astronauts. Once they got back into the ISS, they were tested for contamination. The test proved negative. While in space, they hooked up the permanent cooling system. After returning to the space station, Sunita "relaxed" by watching a football match.



THE STOWAWAY SKUNK

The foul-smelling animal skunk is never befriended by any human being. One of the species, belonging to California, recently travelled 5,000 km for five days on a commercial truck. It so happened, the animal was sound asleep in a large rubber pipe when it was put into a sealed container which was then loaded on the truck. The skunk

went without water and food during its stowaway existence till the truck arrived in Ottawa, in Canada. It was found in a dehydrated condition. The authorities now faced a problem. Having been illegally "imported", the skunk could not be released in the Canadian forests, and they wondered how it could be re-exported to the USA and who would bear the cost. Luckily, the Toronto Wildlife Centre took charge of the animal during its "sojourn" in Canada! They even gave the female skunk a name—Dorothy, after the character in the 1939 movie version of *The Wizard of Oz* who fell asleep and woke up in another country. Fortunately for everybody, neither during its travel nor later the skunk never once released its obnoxious smell.

KALEIDOSCOPE



THE FORBIDDEN CUPBOARD



This incident occurred one year ago. My grandparents live in a small house in a beautiful village in Kerala. The house is well kept. Every corner looks spic and span, thanks to my grandmother. She is so meticulous in her work and strives hard to maintain her routine. Though the entire village praises her for her concern for discipline, it is grandfather whom she would like to be disciplined!

Grandmother stores all homemade sweetmeat in a cupboard which is always locked. Grandfather finds sweets simply irresistible. He is a diabetic patient and is often warned by his doctor to avoid sweets. Grandmother

usually prepares these sweets during the holidays when we visit them. Grandfather then begins scheming the ways to get to the cupboard. He once tried bribing us in order to get just one sweet out for him. We gladly accepted it, but when we turned around, we found that grandmother had overheard our plan. Result: we, too, were denied sweets for a week.

One day grandfather found a golden opportunity. The milkman came late, disrupting grandmother's schedule. She was supposed to attend a wedding. In her hurry, she forgot to lock the cupboard. When she realised it, her worries began to build up. It was evening by the time she returned. The first thing she did was to walk up to the cupboard. She was surprised. Not a jar had been moved; the total count of the sweets added up. That meant, grandfather had not touched a single piece! At the dinner table, she placed a piece of sweetmeat on grandfather's plate, and smiled.

-Serena Fernandes (16), Khar

NATURE



Nature, nature everywhere
Trees and plants here and there,

Some are small, some are big,
Some colourful, some beautiful.
Winter, summer and rain
Sometimes windy and sometimes sunny.

Whole universe is a part of nature,
Sun, moon and sparkling stars
Are blanketing the sky.
We can see nature,
And feel nature
Live each day as best as nature,
God it was who created Nature.

-Darshit Parekh (9), Khar

NATURE IN SPRING

In the woods the birds fly,
Amongst the flowers I smoothly lie.
The breeze passes through the trees,
A moment I would like to seize.
As the cuckoos sing their happy song,
I would like to listen to them all day long.
Down the hills speeds the stream,
Covering up its bed to the brim.
The trees with its tenderly green,
Move one's heart with lots of dream.
With the blessings of Mother Nature,
Merrily live thyself all creatures.
Every moment of sight is free of worry,
Which only Nature can carry.

Watching nature all day long,
Singing its happy song.

-Zenitha Das (11), Cuttack



KALEIDOSCOPE

Teacher : Tell me, what you know of Raja Ram Mohun Roy.



Meghna : Ma'am, Raja, Ram, Mohan and Roy were four good friends. We find their names in history books.

Teacher : Suppose, you have three guavas and you eat one of them, how many guavas will you then have?



- Tanya M.Jhaveri (8), Mumbai

Mother (in panic) :

Doctor, my boy has swallowed a mice.

Doctor : Madam, calm down, ask him to swallow a cat.



Teacher : When was Gandhiji born?

Student : On his birthday.



Air-hostess : Are you a vegetarian or non-vegetarian?



Passenger : I'm an Indian.

C.Yashwant (13), Sullurpet



Ram (after running in a race) : My feet are about to give way.

Shyam : But there was no one behind you.

Shamika Kumar (10), Chennai



Vivek : Why are you following the ants?

Varun : Mummy has hidden away the sweets packet. The ants will surely lead me there.



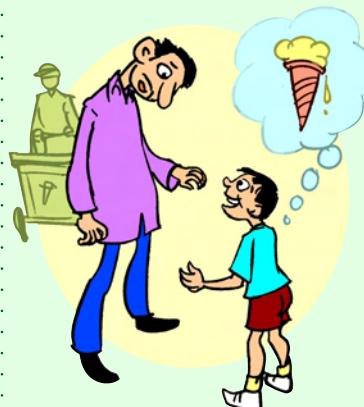
Thief's wife : There is no salt for cooking.

Please fetch some from the shop.

Thief : Please wait. Let the shop close.



D. Revathy (11), Chennai



Rohit : Papa, let me eat an ice-cream.

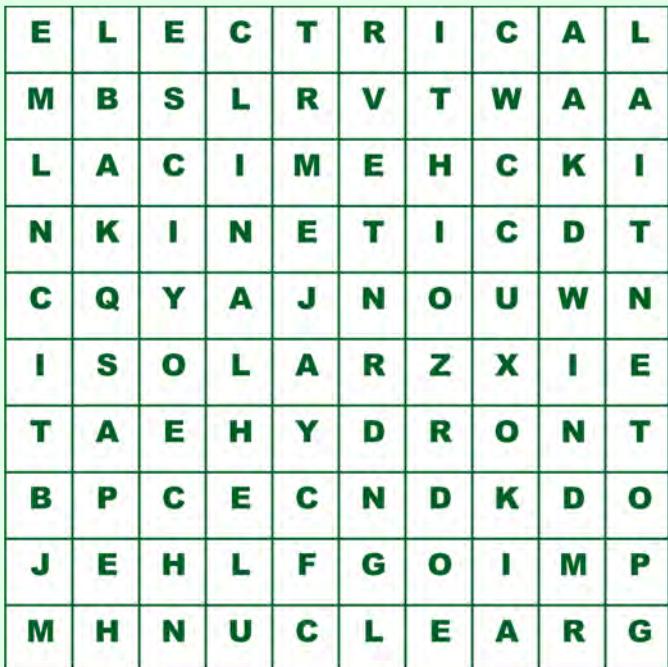
Father : Rohit, you should not eat ice-cream in winter.

Rohit : Please, Papa, I shall heat it before eating it.

D.Jayammal (10), Chennai

CROSSWORD

The earth is full of different kinds of energies. Find ten kinds in the grid below:



-Mayuri P. Awati (12) Belgaum

RIDDLES

1. Why is it impossible to take the picture of a woman with long hair? -S. Akaash (12), Thrissur



2. Do you know these authors: a) one who is fast, b) one who is heavy, c) one who is rich? -Vismita Katyayani (12), Bangalore



-K. Samuel Suhas (11), Hyderabad

4. I travel around the world, but I have a permanent place. Who am I? -K.R. Vishnu Deva (11), Hosur

5. What could be the opposite of Muthuswamy?

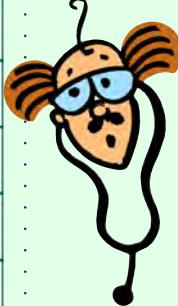
6. What has one head and fifty tails?



-Ashutosh (15), Alike
7. What bird works in a kitchen?
-Madhavi K. (12)
Bangalore

8. Why should you not believe somebody who is in bed?

-Nisha G.U. (14) Gadag



9. What are doctors afraid of?

10. Why did Thomas Alva Edison invent the bulb?

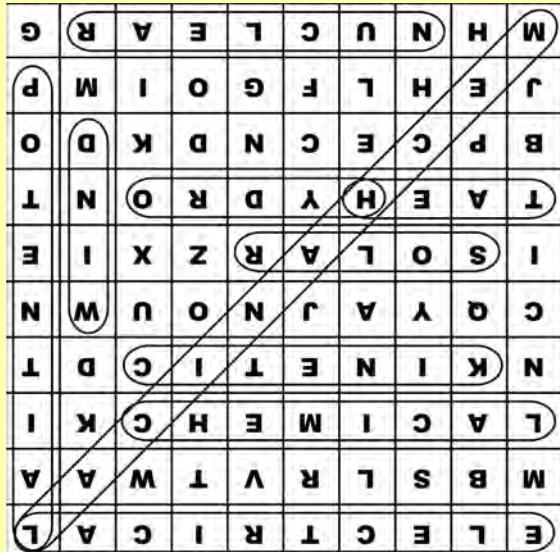
-Ishita Pal (10), Mumbai



darkness.

he is lying! 9. Apple, 10. He was afraid of
6. A 50 paisa coin, 7. Cook-oo-oo!, 8. Because
box on an aircraft, 5. Muthu did not see me,
b) Milton, c) Goldsmith, 3. Fast food, 4. Black
to take a picture!, 2. A) Jonathan Swift,
1. You need a camera, and not long hair,

ANSWERS TO RIDDLES



SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD



FROM KARNATAKA

THE LORD'S REACTION

Madhav was a poor man. He was so poor that he never thought of marrying and raising a family. He did not have a regular job, but he was willing to do any job that people gave him, and they sought his help because he was satisfied and happy with whatever they gave him in cash or in kind. He would never demand what or how much he should get for the job given to him. Those who engaged him never found another person like Madhav to do their bidding. So, he was never without work. And he took pleasure in doing whatever work he was entrusted with.

Sometimes it was only running an errand or it could be cutting firewood or drawing water or washing clothes or bathing cattle in the nearby river or any other odd job. He never found any idle time, and he saw to it that he had something or else to do till evening that would keep him busy all through the day. Before he went home, he would go for a bath in the river and visit the temple and pray for some time. This became his daily routine.

One day, he stood before the idol eyes closed chanting the only *mantra* he knew. But when he opened his eyes, he thought the Lord was looking at him with pitiful eyes. Was the Lord tired? The *sanctum sanctorum* was full of smoke from the incense that was burned by the worshippers. Was the smoke singing the Lord's eyes? Were the garlands they adorned the Lord with weighing his neck down?

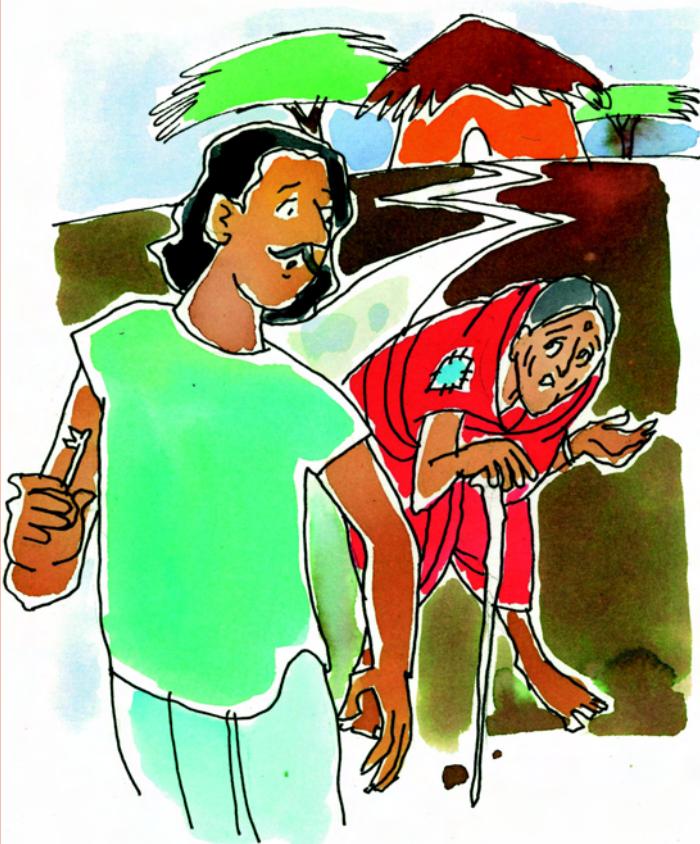
"Lord, you look very tired!" said Madhav. He still had his hands folded. "Please come home with me; I shall cook some dinner for you," added the simpleton that Madhav was. He opened his palms and continued looking at the idol. Was the Lord now smiling at him? Madhav wondered, as he thought he saw the Lord's lips moving.

"Go home, Madhav, cook the meal and then come

back for me," said the Lord. Madhav looked around. There were other worshippers, but the Lord had spoken only to him. His eyes were open and Madhav saw the idol still smiling.

He left the temple and hurried home. He went into the kitchen, collected some grain, *dal* and vegetables, and started cooking a frugal meal for the Lord and for himself. When the food was ready, he closed the door and started for the temple. He had hardly gone a few yards when he was accosted by an old man who was





finding it difficult to walk any further and was resting on his stick. He said, "I've been starving the whole day. Will you please give me some food?"

Madhav took pity on him. "Come with me," he said as he led him home. The old man sat down. He ate heartily, but very little. He appeared satisfied. "Thank you, you're very kind, God will be with you always!" said the old man as he picked up his stout stick and walked away.

Madhav again closed the door and hardly had he walked a few yards when who stopped him on his way but an old woman? She was looking sad, lonely, and hungry. He wondered whether he could make her happy by at least giving her some food. He took her home and fed her. After she ate and washed her hands, he saw in her eyes a contented look and she was no longer sad. "May God bless you, my son! I shall never forget this day."

Madhav saw the old woman go away as he closed his door and started walking towards the temple. As he hurried in his steps, he thought somebody had tugged at his shawl. It was an ill-clad boy, who was pointing at his empty stomach with a pleading look. Madhav understood

that he was also asking for food. He did not think for a moment but caught hold of his hands and led him to his house and offered food. As he ate, the boy told him he was an orphan and driven to begging. Madhav took pity on him. "Come again tomorrow evening and I shall give you food," he told the boy as he closed the door for the third time and turned towards the temple.

He stood before the idol with folded hands and said apologetically, "O Lord, please forgive me, I am late in coming back to take you home."

"But you've already fed me, Madhav!" said the Lord.

"But when, my Lord?" queried Madhav in a puzzled tone.

"Didn't you feed an old man, an old woman and an orphan? You were really feeding me, and I'm very happy," said the Lord.

"But you had promised to come home with me!" Madhav reminded the Lord.

"All right, I shall come. Proceed, and I shall follow you," said the Lord.

When he reached home, Madhav opened the door and only then did he turn back. The Lord stood resplendent. "Please sit down, my Lord, I'm so glad you came to my house. Let me at least give you a fruit."

The Lord ate the fruit and then got up to go. Madhav prostrated before him. When he was up on his feet, he could not see the Lord, whom he wanted to accompany up to the temple. Anyway Madhav was a very happy man that evening.

The news that the Lord had visited the poor Madhav's home reached the rich landlord's ears. Hadn't he contributed a lot of money for the renovation of the temple? Still the Lord never favoured him with a visit. He went to the temple and stood before the idol with folded hands. "O Lord, when will you visit my home?" he asked. It was not as much as a plea, but it had even a touch of admonition.

The landlord heard the Lord's voice. "All right. Go home and cook a meal, and then come back to fetch me." The landlord smiled and returned home. He called his servants and asked them to cook a sumptuous meal. When they announced that the meal was ready, he hurried

Mercedes Benz is a world famous brand of luxury cars. But how did the name 'Mercedes' come to be chosen for the car? It was Emil Jellinek, the Austro-Hungarian consul and one of the earliest buyers of the model, who persuaded Gottlieb Daimler, the manufacturer, to rename the model after his daughter, Mercedes Jellinek, figuring that this non-German sounding name would be more popular with the French buying public.



to the temple. On his way he was accosted by an old man saying he was hungry.

"I've no time to look after you, you scum. Why don't you go and find a job? You're quite able-bodied," said the landlord angrily, and moved on.

He had not taken half-a-dozen steps when he heard a woman's voice. "O Master, I've been wandering alone since morning, and I haven't eaten a morsel and I'm too hungry to take another step!" pleaded the old woman.

The landlord could not check his anger. "I never realised this village has so many riff-raffs," he almost shouted at the woman. "Go away, I've no time for you now." He then walked away without turning back.

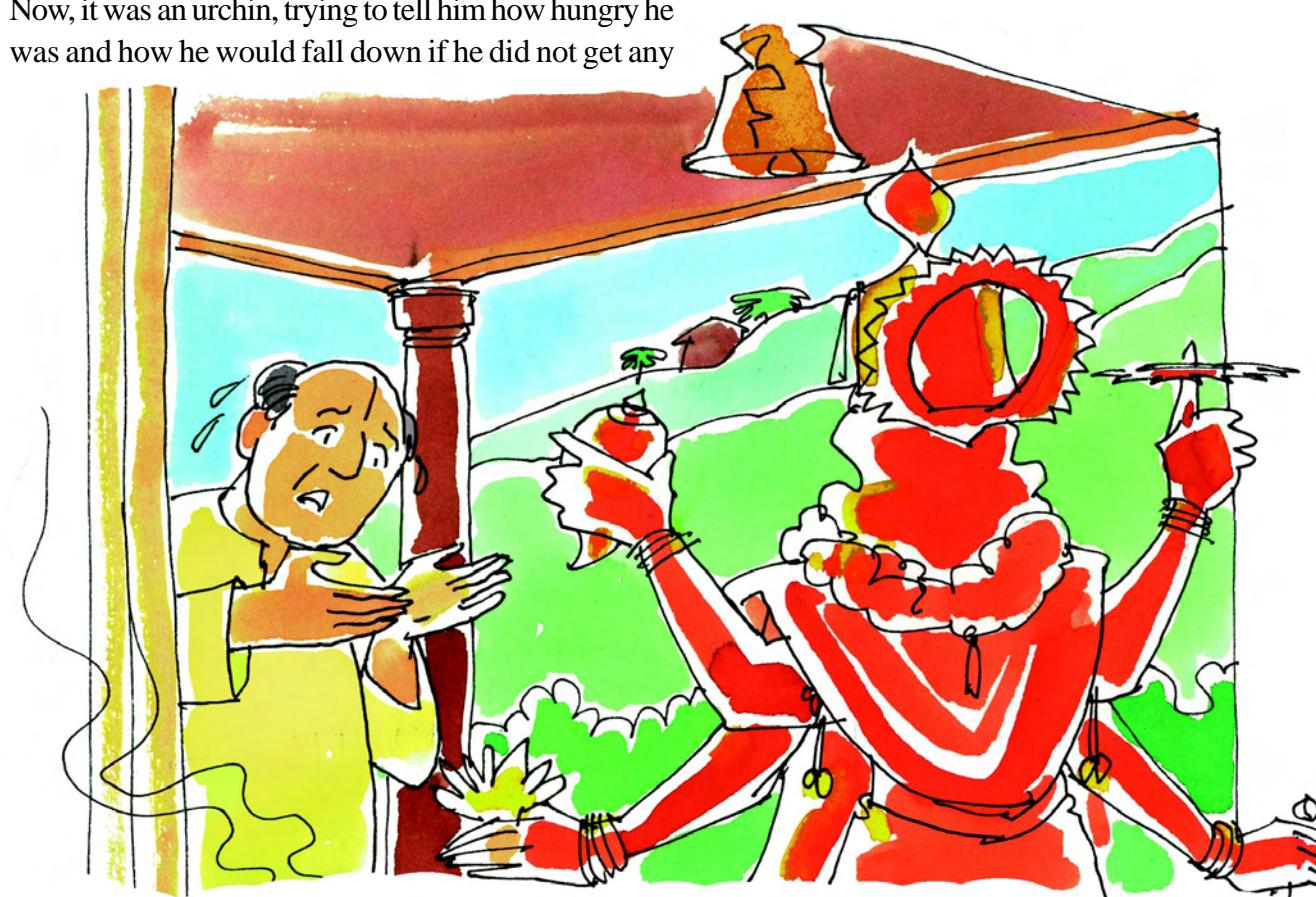
He did not expect that he would be halted again. Now, it was an urchin, trying to tell him how hungry he was and how he would fall down if he did not get any

food. The landlord merely pushed him out of his way and increased the pace of his steps.

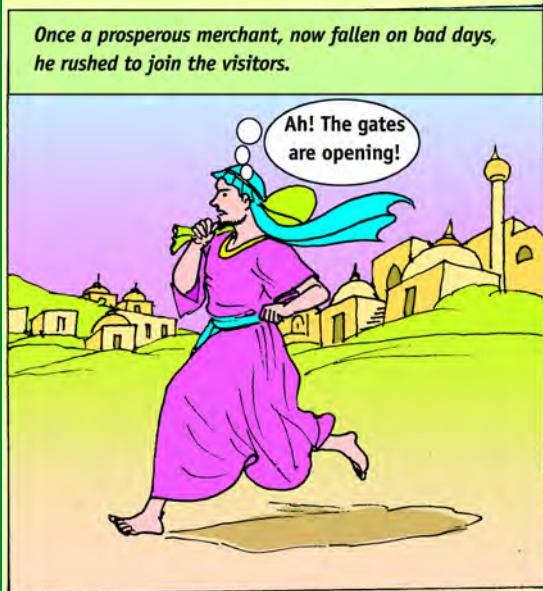
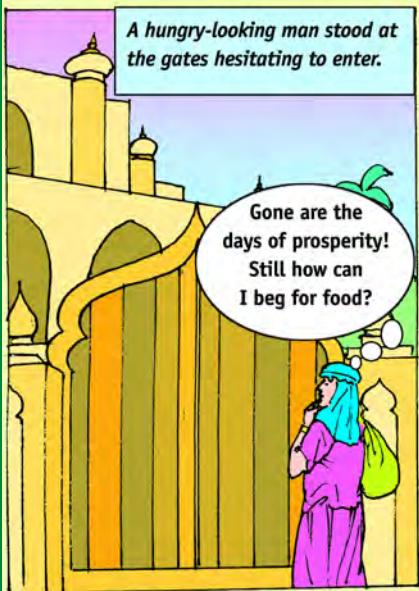
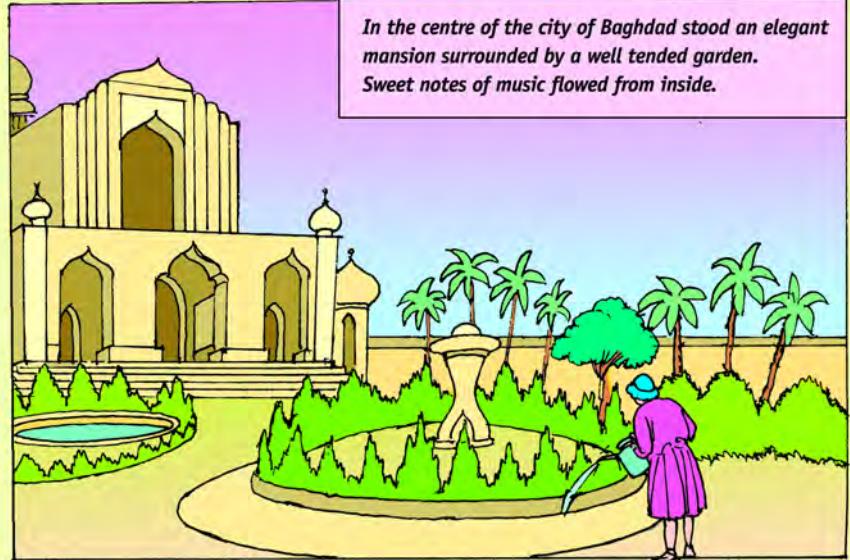
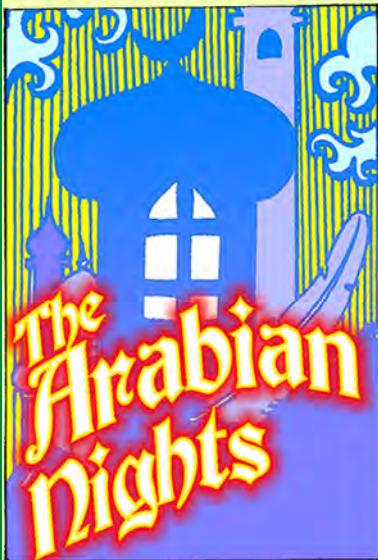
He was breathless by the time he reached the temple. Once again he stood before the idol and said, "O Lord, see I've come to take you. A sumptuous meal is ready for you, my Lord."

"But I've already been to you, though you had no time to care for me. First, you called me a scum, then you described me as a riff raff, and I was really shocked when you pushed me out of your way. Every time I came to you, you were harsh to me. Why, then, should I spend any time for you?" said the Lord.

The rich landlord looked at the idol and he now saw only a figure carved in hard stone.



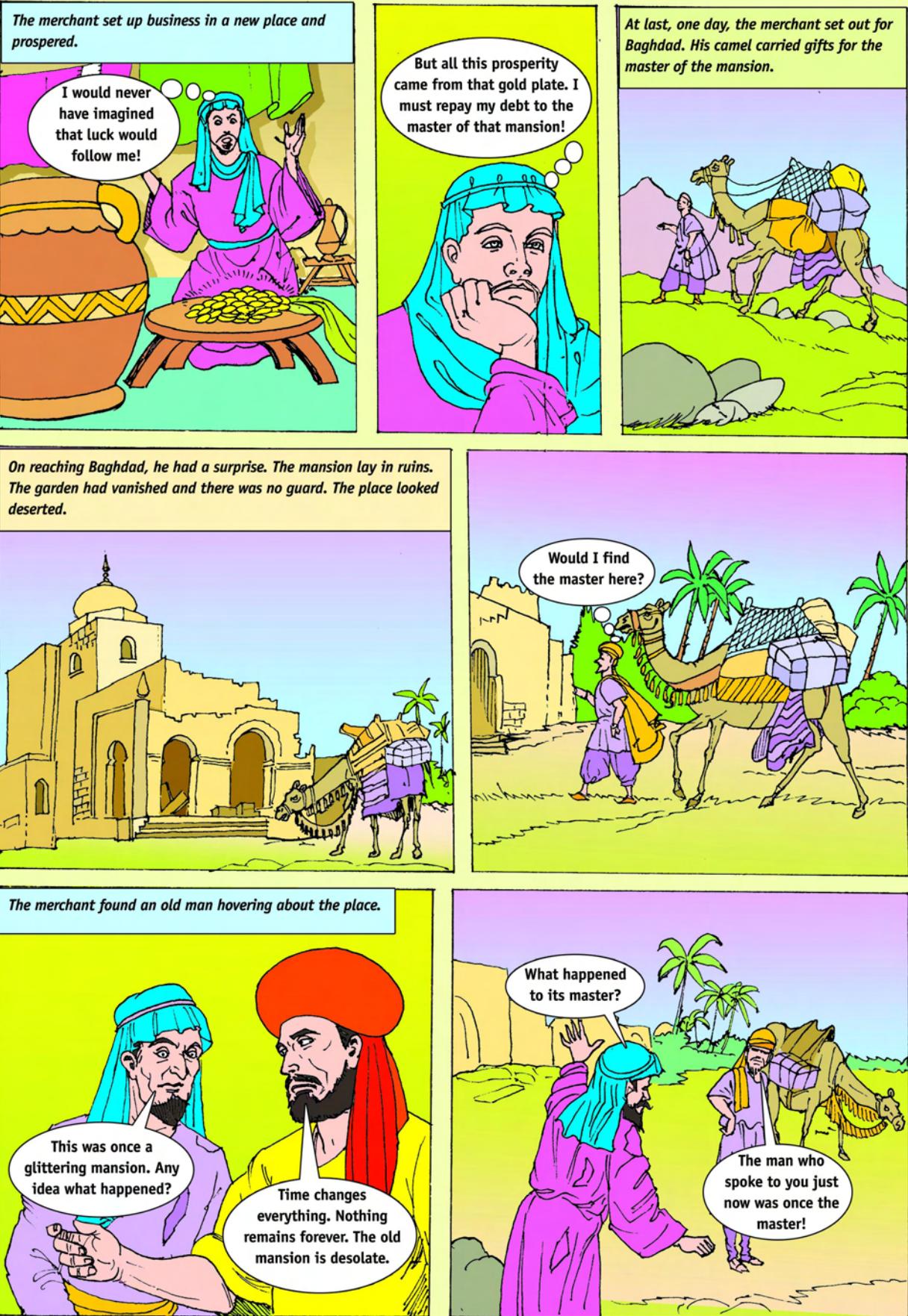
THE ARABIAN NIGHTS



A G O L D E N G I F T F R O M A D O G



THE ARABIAN NIGHTS



A GOLDEN GIFT FROM A DOG



THE WINGED GUEST

One day Rohit was engrossed in his studies when he found that a house sparrow had entered his room through the open door and was desperately looking for a way to go out. His dog Caesar started barking excitedly. Before Rohit could get up, the sparrow had flown into the next room followed by an angry Caesar, who could not understand how a mere sparrow could encroach on its territory.

His mother sat there doing cross-stitch embroidery, when the sparrow blindly flew towards the moving fan, striking one of the blades hard, and fell down. Rohit ran towards the sparrow and picked it up gently. The sparrow was drab in colour, an ash grey brown above with thick streaks and a whitish belly. Its heart was beating slowly though its eyes were closed. Rohit surmised that it was unconscious. Blood was oozing from one wing. Rohit rushed it to a vet who bandaged the wing.

Rohit automatically assumed the role of a nurse. He was a habitual late riser. Every second day he used to miss his bus. However, after the arrival of the sparrow, he would be up with the first ray of the sun because the sparrow would start chirping 'cheer, cheer' demanding his attention. Rohit's mother made a remark about the extraordinary change in Rohit but he simply shrugged his shoulders and said, "I feel responsible with the sparrow in my care." He fed it with millet, barley, rice and other cereals. He kept a dish of water that he frequently replenished.

Though it attempted to fly, it could not, because of the bandaged wing. Otherwise, it was quite active. It would peck at the hanky Rohit's mother was embroidering, so the coloured threads started hanging out leaving his mother fretting and fuming. When his mother would wring the clothes for drying, the sparrow would

get drenched in the downpour.

Rohit started placing a plate for it on the dining table and it perched itself on its edge to eat buttered popcorn made especially for it in the microwave oven. It would perch itself on the shoulders of Rohit's father when he took his morning and evening walk in the garden. However, when it took to destroying vegetables and flower buds, the sparrow



was put under house arrest. But the cheeky bird would not be deterred.

When Rohit's sister sat down for breakfast, the sparrow pecked at her toast while she was having her corn flakes. Her toast would have holes in it that Rohit held out for others to see.

The sparrow found a sympathiser in Rohit's grandmother. While she had her evening tea, she would pour a little in a saucer for the sparrow to sip and call out, "Beti, come here and have some tea." The sparrow would perch itself on the edge of the saucer and pretend to be interested.

But the honeymoon was soon over. The sparrow recovered quickly and was fit as a fiddle.



It was unanimously decided to set it free in its own environs, as no animal or bird can be happy when its freedom is curbed. Rohit last saw it strutting about arrogantly and twitching its tail before it flew away chirruping.

- Ruchi Sharma

Chandamama India Quiz -1 (January 2007) Answers:

1. Rishyasringa. He could cause rainfall wherever he walked.
2. The name of a river mentioned in *The Ramayana*.
3. Krishna hunted Panchajana, the demon who lived in the sea. He had kidnapped Punardatta, his guru Sandeepani's son. After killing the demon and rescuing the boy, Krishna took away the demon's conch and called it Panchajanya.
4. Paarijaata; it was planted in 'Swarga'.
5. Kripi
6. Goddess Saraswati
7. Devavrata - he took a vow never to marry and have children, so that his father Shantanu's son from his second wife could inherit the throne.
8. Arjuna, who was disgusted with Duryodhana's intrigues.
9. Sita
10. Sagara - Bhagiratha
11. Holi, the festival of colours, is associated with Krishna and his playfulness with gopis.
12. The women were Kausalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra, wives of King Dasaratha. They gave birth to Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana and Shatrughna.

THERE WERE NO ALL-CORRECT ENTRIES



NEIGHBOURS' ADVICE

Ramu was a simple peasant. He owned a small strip of ancestral land in his village on which he cultivated bananas. With his hard work, he could raise a dense grove of the trees. He led a contented life with the meager income he got.

One day, while he was busy working in his grove, a horse-drawn cart pulled up in front of his grove. He was surprised to find the wife of the Zamindar getting down and walking towards him. He was excited to see her and accorded her a warm welcome. "Ramu! I want to buy your banana grove along with your hut. I shall give you five hundred rupees. What do you say?"

Ramu was not expecting such a proposal, that too from the Zamindar's wife. He was at a loss to give a reply immediately.

The lady wondered: was he expecting more? "All right! Take seven hundred and fifty rupees. Will that do?"

Ramu was taken aback. He knew that his grove and the hut together would hardly fetch two hundred rupees, and here she was offering more than three times the value! He could not

believe his ears. In his excitement, he fumbled for words. She got annoyed. "What! Do you still want more? You're a greedy fellow! Take one thousand rupees and sell it to me today itself. Otherwise, the deal is off!"

Ramu scrambled to his feet. "Oh noble lady! I'm fully agreeable! I shall vacate my hut this evening itself. You can take over my entire land."

With a triumphant smile, she said, "I shall send money through my servant in the evening!" She then left the place. No sooner had she gone than Ramu was swarmed by his neighbours who had been watching all the proceedings.

"Chhhh! What blunder have you done, Ramu?" said one of them. "She has offered a thousand rupees for your grove whose value is hardly two hundred rupees. Don't you feel there's something fishy? Why should she offer so much? Certainly, there is something hidden in your grove of which she has come to know."

"What else? There must be a hidden treasure somewhere in your land. Its value might perhaps run to several lakhs. Why were you so hasty in accepting the deal?" remarked another.

"Even now it isn't late," chipped in another. "You refuse to sell it and search for the treasure."

Now, Ramu was in a great dilemma. When he went home, his wife told him: "Our neighbours must be right. There must be a hidden treasure somewhere which she knows, of which we do not know. Wait till our neighbours are asleep, then you dig the land thoroughly and search for the treasure."

So, when the Zamindar's servant came with the money, Ramu refused to part with his land. In the night, Ramu uprooted all the banana trees and started digging the land. He did not find anything. Then, he dug up the floor of his hut, too. Again, he was disappointed. Thus, after toiling for the whole night, he was left with a ravaged grove and nothing else. He was crestfallen. His wife consoled him saying he could rush to the zamindar's wife, render an apology and plead to her to buy his land.

Accordingly, Ramu ran to her house and fell at her feet. He requested her to reconsider the matter. She laughed aloud and said, "Ramu! I don't need your land anymore."

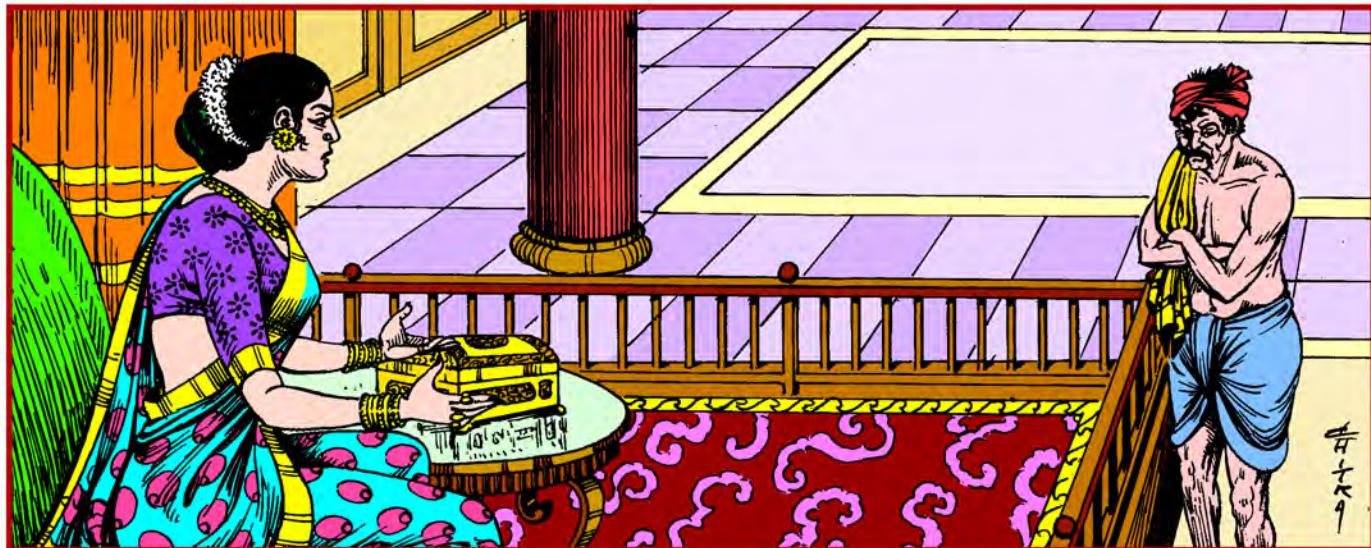
Ramu tottered on hearing it. "Why ma'am? It was only yesterday that you evinced a great interest in buying my property. Why this change of mind?"

She then proceeded to explain: "I've been telling my husband for long to sell his old horse cart and buy a new one. He would not agree. He wasn't willing to sell what was his ancestral property. Yesterday, we had an argument. He said men are emotionally attached to their ancestral properties and would not part with them.

"He cited your case and said, 'Even Ramu, who owns a small strip of land, would not like to sell it at any cost.' I challenged him that I shall persuade you to sell your property in just one day and we agreed upon a bet of one thousand rupees. That's why I came to you yesterday to buy your land. You refused ultimately and I, too, lost my bet. Having lost my bet already, I'm no more interested in buying your land."

She continued: "Do you know something? The same neighbours, who advised you not to sell your land, came to me secretly and each one was trying to offer his land at less than half the price I offered you. You were actually misled by your selfish neighbours. At least hereafter, don't pay any heed to their advice and try to use your own discretion."

Ramu, now greatly disappointed, returned home sad.



WHEN A SPIT SAVED A LIFE



Emperor Akbar stood on the balcony of the palace. A cool breeze, laden with the fragrance of flowers, wafted in. The smell lured the Emperor. He felt drawn to the smell. He decided to go close to the flowers. Quickly he walked down the steps, running down from the balcony to the garden. He touched ground and slowly moved along the footpath that ran across the bed of flowers. The flowers were in full bloom. Red roses danced in the mild wind, reaching out to yellow roses and white roses. Chrysanthemums and gladioli and lilies, too, swayed with the wind. Bees buzzed around, flitting from flower to flower. The rays of the sun filtered through the leaves and formed patterns on the green grass.

Emperor Akbar lost his heart to the scene. It was as

if the heavens had come down on earth. He moved around, taking time to admire the colours of the flowers. The smell of the flowers filled the air around. The smell rushed into him with every breath and cheered him.

He strolled as if in a trance. He was so lost in the beauty of the flowers and the power of the fragrance that he did not notice a stone protruding on the footpath. Only its tip stood out, ever so slightly. The Emperor tripped. A shooting pain hit him. It made him wince. At the same time, he lost his balance, stumbled, threw up his hands and made frantic efforts to avoid a fall. He succeeded in the effort. But it left him in a state of shock and anger.

He sat on a bench, set under a canopy of creepers over a bamboo arch, and checked the toe of his right foot. The toe looked cherry red. It throbbed with pain.

The more he examined the toe, the more angry he felt. "Where are you, you wretch? Why are you not tending the garden? Where have you vanished, you ingrate!" he screamed for the gardener.

He got no answer. For, the gardener was not around. The gardener had gone to his hut for picking up a chopper.

The Emperor called out, still more loudly. Still there was no response. The Emperor quivered with rage. Where had the gardener vanished? Why wasn't he around to respond to the call of the Badshah? Akbar gnashed his teeth in fury. "That man deserves death!" the Emperor muttered to himself while he hurried back to the palace. His face was red with rage.

He stomped into the durbar hall and clapped. An aide rushed in. He bowed, touched the ground and stood respectfully awaiting the orders of the Emperor.

"Go. Catch the gardener. Keep him in prison till tomorrow. Tomorrow, he dies!" the Emperor spoke in an agitated tone.

The aide did not seek ask the reason. Nobody dared



seek reason from the Emperor. He turned, when he heard the Emperor add, "The wretch! I got hurt because of his carelessness. I went for a walk in the garden. My foot hit a stone that stood protruding from the ground. The gardener should have taken care to keep the footpath smooth. He should have been vigilant. But he wasn't. The fool deserves death."

The aide felt it rather too severe a punishment. However, he did not dare argue with the Emperor.

He took a couple of soldiers with him. The party reached the gardener's hut. He saw the official, came out, and with folded arms, respectfully received the party. He greeted them, politely, and enquired, "What brings you here?"

"I'm sorry, poor man, but I'm helpless. We've to carry out the orders of the Badshah. We've been asked to arrest you and keep you in prison today. At dawn tomorrow you're to die," the aide somehow managed to convey the message.

"What wrong have I done?" the gardener was perplexed.

The aide explained the reason. The gardener's face turned an ashy pale. He quietly let the soldiers chain him and led him away. His wife heard the commotion and rushed out. The official explained why her man was in chains. She fell at his feet. "Leave my poor man alone. He has done nobody any harm," she wailed.

"I can't let him off. I am only carrying out the orders of *Alampana*," said the aide. Then he added, "But you have time till tomorrow morning to save your husband. And there is only one man who can help you."

The poor woman broke into loud sobs. She beat her chest with her fists.

"One man can save your husband," the official repeated the message.

She asked him, between sobs, "Who's it? Please tell me!"

"Birbal," the aide said, before walking off.

The woman ran to Birbal's presence. She fell at his feet. "Save my husband!" she begged.

"Who are you? And what has happened to your husband?" Birbal asked.



"I'm the royal gardener's wife. My husband has been arrested. He is to be executed tomorrow morning," she wailed.

"But why?"

"I don't know. I'm told that they are the orders of *Alampana*," she explained.

"If your husband is not guilty, he will be freed. I promise to get you justice," Birbal assured her.

But she did not feel fully assured. Her man's life was at stake. She knew how hard life would be if she lost him. That thought haunted her even as she left Birbal's presence and went back to her hut, with a heavy heart.

Birbal met the aide. He found out the details. "Take me to the cell where the gardener is kept," Birbal told the aide.

The aide led him to the prison. The sentries saluted them. Birbal found the gardener sitting huddled in a corner, gaping at the ceiling. Birbal called out to him. He raised his eyes, saw Birbal, and rushed to the iron bars of the cell.



"You won't mind if I have a word with him, in private?" Birbal asked the aide. He nodded his head and moved back.

Birbal told the gardener, "Listen. Tomorrow, when the executioner and his assistants come, they will ask you if you have any last wish. Say that you want to meet *Alampana* once. They will lead you to his presence. Then....." Birbal went closer and whispered in his ears the plan he had in mind. "Do what I told you and you will be saved," Birbal assured him.

The gardener's face fell. He shivered with fright.

In terms of weight, the sperm whale is the 'brainiest' mammal in the world. Its brain weighs up to 9 kg – six times heavier than a human brain! To accommodate this prodigious brain, it has an enormous head, which comes up to about a third of its body length.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Falabella, a horse breed from Argentina, holds the record for being the smallest horse in the world. An adult is less than 76 cm tall. Unlike other breeds, the Falabella has 17 vertebrae instead of eighteen, and one less pair of ribs.

Birbal was asking him to do the impossible. He protested. Birbal asked, "Do you want to live?" The gardener nodded his head. "If so, do what I told you. And all will be well with you," Birbal once again assured him.

Next day, Birbal was sharing a joke with Akbar when the aide entered, bowed and waited. The Emperor signalled to him to speak. He said, "*Alampana*, the gardener begs for an audience with you before he is executed."

"Bring him in," the Emperor's eyes were like glowing coal. The gardener was in chains. The chains rattled when he walked forward. He sank on his knees and made his obeisance to the Emperor. Then he stood up, and spat on the floor.

"How dare you do that, you wretch?" the Emperor exploded.

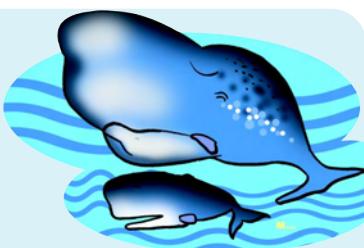
"*Alampana*, you've sentenced me to death for a very minor lapse. The public may think that I haven't received justice. So I decided to commit a grave crime. A man who spits in court deserves death," the gardener replied, in a cool voice.

Akbar saw the logic. Then came a thought. Someone must have advised the gardener to act in this manner. Who could that be?

"Who advised you to spit in court?"

The gardener looked at Birbal. The Emperor understood. "Birbal, my friend, thank you. I now realize I had sentenced the gardener to death in haste. Let him go. He is a loyal servant."

The gardener thanked Akbar. "You owe your life to Birbal," the Emperor reminded him. - **R.K. Murthi**



RICH IN HUMOUR

FIRST SUN STORIES **A KATHA BOOK FOR CHILDREN -** **BY KATHA, NEW DELHI**

Did you ever wonder how the squirrel got the dark streaks on her back, or the tiger his striped coat, or how the bear and the elephant turned black? Or how the goat got his horns, why the dog always chases the goat? *First Sun Stories* – a delightful collection of less-known folktales from North East India–has all the answers.

The languid descriptive style, detailing the scenic beauty of the countryside, makes the lovely landscape of the North East come alive in our mind's eye. In this, the authors – T Bijoykumar Singh, Easterine Iralu, Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih, Mamang Dai and Shantanu Phukan – are ably aided by a panel of artists, whose colourful illustrations bring the stories to life. In particular, Sanjay Sundaram, Sonali Biswas, Prashanta Kumar Nayak and Neeta Gangopadhyaya deserve commendation for the vibrant and lifelike quality of their illustrations.

While most of the stories may 'have never been on the page before', as the blurb on the back cover states, at least two – 'Tejimola' and 'The legend of Joymala' – are popular folktales which have appeared in children's magazines (including *Chandamama*) and various folktale anthologies. 'The soothsayer', a hilarious tale of an ordinary man who rose to the position of the royal astrologer by sheer good luck, is another familiar story with several variants even in India.

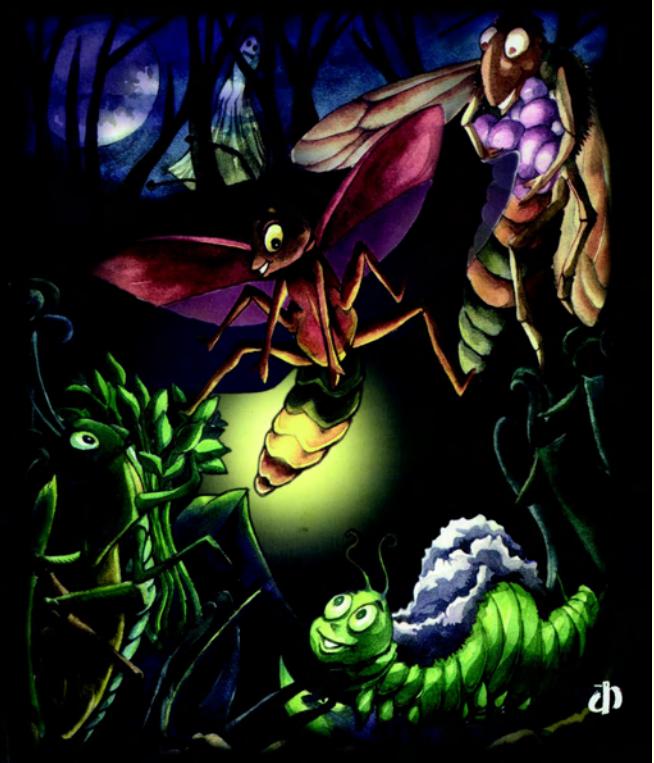
While the stories are well narrated, rich in humour and engrossing, one cannot help wishing that some of them had avoided stereotyped characterisation, as it would have a negative impact on the minds of young readers. Maybe the stories are representative of north-eastern folklore and legend, but was it really necessary to dwell on the stepmother's atrocities at such length, as is done in 'Tejimola' and, to less extent, in 'The Hornbill Girl'?

A main drawback is the lack of a glossary giving the meanings of local words, such as *mekhela chaddar*, *pithas*, *kolosi*, etc, which appear more than once in some of the stories. Readers from outside the North East may find this a deterrent to their enjoyment of the book. Regretfully, the exercise of editing, at least in some stories, leaves much to be desired. This reviewer found expressions like "his mother quickened to the door", "the unfortunate broom", and "the sound of Ren's life" rather jarring. However, on the whole, *First Sun Stories* no doubt is a fine book, and a valuable addition to any library.

-Rajee Raman

FIRST SUN STORIES

UNUSUAL FOLK TALES FROM THE NORTH EAST



DELHI IS FAR!

Ghiasuddin Tughlaq, the Sultan of Delhi, was keen to construct a new wall around his fortress. That was in the 14th century when there were not many labourers around the city. Yet, the Sultan was sure that his lieutenants would be able to mobilize a huge work force, using his command. Alas, that was not to be. The labourers were busy digging for an artificial lake to fulfil the wishes of a saintly man, Nizamuddin Aulia, revered by both Hindus and Muslims as a fakir.

“Divert the workers for our work. Aulia’s lake can wait,” ordered the annoyed Sultan. The order was taken to the fakir as well as the workers. “The wall can wait,” said the fakir. The workers, too, did not pay heed to the Sultan’s command. What was to annoy the Sultan more, the workers put in their labour for the fakir’s project without accepting any remuneration.

The Sultan decided to teach Aulia a lesson. But before he had any time to act, there was a revolt in Bengal, which was a part of his dominion, and he had to lead his army to suppress it. His son Muhammad remained in charge of the administration in Delhi. Muhammad was directed to complete the wall, leading the workers away from the site of the lake, hook or by crook.

Muhammad, however, revered the fakir. He did nothing to disturb the work on the lake in progress.

Sultan Ghiasuddin suppressed the rebellion in Bengal. At the same time he received reports of what was going on in the capital. He swore vengeance against the fakir. He also voiced his disgust for his son, Muhammad.

As the Sultan’s triumphant return march began, all were sure that he would put the fakir to death and punish Muhammad as well. The fakir’s well-wishers and devotees advised him to flee Delhi. The fakir only smiled.

“O Master, think of your fate when the angry Sultan reaches Delhi!” he was warned by several people.

“Dilli dur ast!” – Delhi is far away – replied the fakir.

Meanwhile Muhammad was busy erecting a magnificent platform and a gorgeous looking arch to welcome his victorious



father into the capital. The Sultan was by then approaching the city quite fast.

"We beseech you, Sir, for the sake of your life, please escape!" the fakir's anxious devotees told him.

"Dilli dur ast!" was the remark made by the fakir once again. He said the same thing again and again thereafter when people pleaded with him every few minutes to run away from the Sultan's wrath.

Amidst the din of drums and bugles the Sultan entered the welcome arch and ascended the high platform. There were two decorated thrones on it. One was meant for the Sultan and the other for Muhammad. But the Sultan signaled his younger son to occupy the second seat, indicating that Muhammad was no longer the heir to the throne.

All of a sudden the platform collapsed. There were cries of horror. A huge mushroom of dust blinded the large crowd. When the noise and the dust subsided and the Sultan's body and that of his chosen son were dragged out of the rubble, both were found dead. Alas, Delhi remained far for Ghiasuddin.

Was that an accident? The African traveller Ibn Batuta does not think so. According to him the arch and the platform were a death trap set for the Sultan.

Dilli dur ast is a popular proverb, meaning that a goal that seemed almost achieved could unexpectedly remain beyond one's reach. (MD)

ARISTOCRATIC ORIGIN

Mr. Rajkumar was a self-made man who had clawed his way up from humble origins to become the town's richest businessman. However, he was tight-fisted when it came to spending money. Knowing this, most donation-seekers steered clear of him.

However, an earnest young volunteer helping a charitable organisation was sure that his impassioned pleas had the power to sway even the hardest heart. He managed to get an appointment with Mr. Rajkumar, and started an inspired lecture about the sufferings of the poor.

When he had gone on without stopping for ten minutes, the old man snapped, "All right, all right. Here's my donation!" He took out a note from his wallet and stretched it out to the youngster.

The latter took it eagerly, but was aghast to see that it was only a ten-rupee note. "Why, Sir," he burst out indignantly, "I met your son this morning, and he gave me not less than five hundred rupees to our cause!"

"Ah yes, he would," answered the old man imperturbably. "He's the son of a rich man – whereas, my friend, I'm the son of a poor farmer!"





MYSTERY OF THE TINKLING ANKLETS

Jayanth, on completion of his studies in the school in his village Mayanoor, went to the nearest town Shivpur for higher studies. After graduation, he got a job in the same town and settled there along with his parents. However, he made it a point to visit his village during festivals to enjoy the company of his childhood friends. Once, during Diwali, he visited Mayanoor and met his friends. Their houses were on the same street. His friends were happy to see Jayanth and each one compelled him to stay with him. Jayanth agreed to stay at each friend's house by turns.

After enjoying the whole day in the company of his friends, Jayanth returned to Mahendar's house at night.

Before going to bed, he found his friend worshipping Hanuman. He wondered how his friend had suddenly become so pious. Around midnight, Jayanth was startled when he heard the tinkle of anklets in the street. When he got up, he saw his friend chanting a hymn to Hanuman, hands folded and eyes closed. He was perplexed. Soon, the sound of the tinkle faded, and Mahendar opened his eyes.

He met Jayanth's gaze with a sheepish grin

and explained: "Jayanth! Did you hear the tinkling of anklets? This is happening every night. I went to an exorcist who told me that a female ghost is on the prowl and she is trying to come into my house. To drive it away, he did some bizarre rites and advised me to chant a prayer to Hanuman. Still, the ghost is prowling round my house."

Jayanth could not share his belief. "Have you discussed this matter with our friends?" said he.

"No!" said his friend. "They might scoff at me if I tell them. Please don't tell them anything about whatever has happened here tonight and whatever I'm doing!"

The next day, Jayanth chose to go to his friend Shiv Kumar's house for the night. While asleep, he was disturbed by the same tinkling of anklets in the street. He found Shiv Kumar sitting up in his bed and praying to Goddess Lakshmi. Later, he explained: "This has been going on for a month. I consulted the temple priest. He told me that the goddess was trying to step into my house. In order to persuade her to come in to my house, I have to perform some rites. Please don't tell any of our friends about this. They would only laugh at me."

The third day, Jayanth spent with Sekhar. At the dead of night, he heard the same mysterious tinkling of anklets. Sekhar was not in his bed. Jayanth found him in his garden, digging the ground.

Sekhar explained: "I met an astrologer to know about this mystery. He said an angel was guarding her treasure in my backyard and if I digged the land whenever the tinkling was heard, I might be able to locate the treasure. So, I'm toiling for the past one month to lay hands on the treasure. Please don't disclose this to our friends since they might ridicule me."

It appeared very strange to Jayanth that all his three friends, instead of discussing the matter among themselves, were engaged in foolish endeavours each in his own way. The next night, he chose to stay with Manohar. Incidentally, Manohar was the only friend who had been married recently. Both Manohar and his wife gave him a warm welcome. After dinner, Jayanth went to sleep. As he had expected, the sound of anklets was heard, this time it was loud and clear. Further, it appeared to come from somewhere inside the house itself. He heard the main door being opened.

At once, the tinkling faded slightly. Jayanth had a feeling that someone wearing anklets was stepping out of the house. He got up and found that neither Manohar nor his wife was in the house. Jayanth wondered where both of them had gone out at that time of the night! After an hour or so, he again heard the main door opening, followed by the tinkling of anklets. The entire thing appeared mysterious. Jayanth could not sleep thereafter.

In the morning, he wanted to clarify his doubts. With a deep sigh, Manohar said: "My wife is suffering from somnambulism, when the person starts walking while asleep. She would suddenly get up, open the door and walk in the

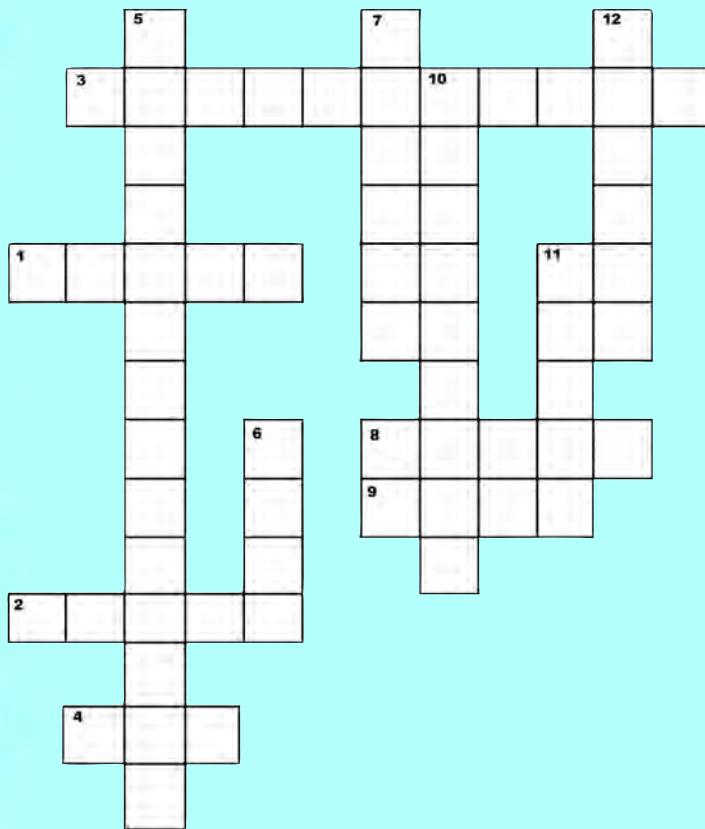


street. Later, she would return on her own, but it is not known at what time she goes for this sleep-walk. And whenever she goes out, I've to follow her to keep a watch. That's why she wears heavy anklets at night while going to bed. Their tinkle would awaken me and I would follow her and escort her back home safely."

At once, Jayanth could understand everything and felt sorry for his friend and his wife. He felt sorry for his other friends too, who, without knowing the actual reason for the mystery of the tinkling anklets, were taking remedial measures in their own foolish ways. Next morning, he called them. "Friends! All this has happened because you did not discuss the matter among yourselves for fear of ridicule. After all, a true friend is one who should share your problems and being close friends, you were hiding things from each other resulting in unnecessary worries and anxieties." He then took leave of his friends with a peaceful mind for having solved their problem.

PUZZLE DAZZLE

CROSSWORD ON ENVIRONMENT



Here is a crossword on environment. Use the clues to solve it.

Down:

- The process by which plants prepares its food (14).
- It is a form of precipitation, which forms when separate drops of water fall to the Earth's surface from clouds (4).
- This plays an important role for rains (6).
- _____ is often the cause of many health problems for all (9).
- More than 70 per cent of the Earth's surface is covered by _____ (5).
- _____ are a major group of living things, including familiar organisms such as trees, flowers, herbs, bushes, grasses, vines, ferns, and mosses. (4).



Across:

- Harbinger of rain (5).
- A major body of saline water (5).
- The pigment in plants which give the green colour to the leaves (11)
- Without this, living things cannot survive in the world (3).
- It is a natural waterway which usually flows from a higher ground to the lower ground (5).
- Plants absorb this gas and release oxygen instead (in formula) (3).

Across: 1. Cloud, 2. Ocean, 3. Chlorophyll, 4. Air, 8. River, 9. CO₂.
Down: 5. Photosynthesis, 6. Rain, 7. Forest, 8. Water, 9. Plants, 10. Pollution, 11. Water, 12. Plants.

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD:

IN THE JAWS OF THE DEADLY REEFS



In the course of his voyage of exploration more than two centuries ago, one of the bravest English sailors, Captain James Cook, came across an archipelago in the South Pacific Ocean. The amiable inhabitants received him and his men with such warm hospitality that the explorer named their sunny little abodes the Friendly Islands. This group of islets, known as the Kingdom of Tonga, nestles between New Zealand and Australia.

Not only were the natives of Tonga gregarious, but they had a love for adventure. Often many of these simple folks dreamed of sailing across the dangerous seas to other countries. So, one fine July morning in 1962, a sturdy little ship called *Tuaikaepau* left the capital town of Tonga, and headed towards New Zealand.

A hefty six feet tall fine seaman, Tevita Fifita, led the crew of seven men. He commanded instant respect and obedience from all those who sailed under him. There were ten other Tongan passengers too. Some of them were boxers, who looked forward to enjoy some bouts of fight in some new land and

return home richer and perhaps wiser. Among them were also a taxi-driver and a skilled carpenter. Thus, each of the seventeen had a dream of his own. But, will they be able to make it across the dangerous ocean?

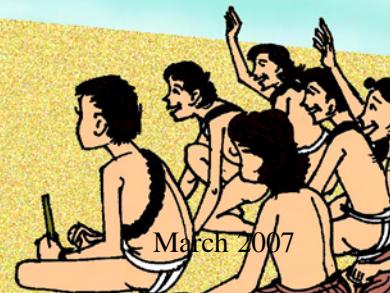
On went the sturdy little ship, *Tuaikaepau*. There blew a fair and gentle breeze. Hundreds of excited Tongans had lined up the home shore to bid the adventurers a fitting farewell.

Before long they sailed straight into the teeth of a strong adverse wind. With each passing day the wind grew fiercer and fiercer and the sea became rougher and rougher.

Soon a terrible gale battered the brave little ship with her seventeen brave men. The sky turned as black as night that brought lashing rains. The turbulent ocean sent up gigantic waves that broke on board. The engine had to be shut down and the sails folded up. *Tuaikaepau* now tossed like a cork on the swelling sea. Everyone began to panic, with the captain asking them to remain calm. Then, suddenly, something extraordinary took place. As though by magic the ship came to a standstill, lightly swaying to and fro and side to side. It looked as though it was being held in a vice-like grip from under the water. But all around, the storm still continued with greater fury.

"What happened?" wondered the captain and his crew.

"Oh! Something strange seems to be taking place!" exclaimed the other passengers.



Soon they realised that their sturdy little ship had firmly stuck on a coral reef. It was one of the deadly Minerva Reefs, every sailor's nightmare. The north and south Minerva Reefs were two rings of almost submerged coral lying between the main island of Tonga and New Zealand. In 1829 a whaling ship, Minerva, wrecked on these reefs and subsequently they were named after the lost vessel. Since then there have been a host of shipwrecks on these two razor-sharp, dangerous reefs that go below the water when the tide is high.

What will now be the fate of Captain Fifita and his men? It was already nightfall and he knew that they were in grave danger. He ordered everyone to hold on to the mast. He counted the dark forms on the swaying deck. All seventeen of them were there. Some seemed to be praying hard looking up to the sky. Others simply clung together for dear life. Now any moment the reef would tear apart their dear ship and they would be at the mercy of the waves and the wind.

"As I can remember, it was so uncomfortable and terrifying as the wind was still blowing strongly, the rain slashing our faces and we were surrounded by darkness. It was also very cold," described one of them.

The tremendous pounding blows from the sea continued all through the dark and eerie night. Then the mighty force of the waves violently breaking on the vast claw-tooth reef tore apart the ship from stem to the stern. Suddenly all found themselves standing in knee-deep water on the deadly corals. They at once began gathering the floating pieces of timber from the wreckage of their vessel.

"As we were stranded on the reef awaiting daylight, I thought that not one was not contemplating death. Throughout the night, I honestly believed that the cold wind, water splashing on us, and the fear of what might happen to us, would overpower everyone's will to

survive," remembered one of the crew, Feuiaki.

Dawn brought hope and one of them excitedly shouted, "Look! There's an island!"

But as the sun rose higher what appeared to be an island now seemed like a two-storey dwelling. A temporary raft was quickly made out of the floating timbers. Then gathering all that could be salvaged from the wreckage of their ship, the seven crew and the ten passengers headed towards the site a mile away. At least it gave them some consolation in the middle of a desolate ocean.

Soon they found to their amazement, what looked like a cosy house from a distance was a large wooden ship thrown up on the highest part of the reef, where she wedged firmly and safely on her side, her mast sticking out almost in a horizontal direction. At high tide only a small portion got submerged in water. Some details found on the deck showed that it was a Japanese ship trapped by the reef three years ago in 1959. It will now be the home of these Tongan castaways till the arrivals of rescuers.

Though abandoned, and perhaps its sailors rescued by another ship, the Japanese vessel had some foodstuff and drums of fuel oil for them. The sea, too, offered them with lots of fish. But there was not enough drinking water. Luckily a matchbox was found and a fire was lit. There was a boiler in the wreck. It was used for cooking and steaming and condensing the salty water to make it drinkable. Soon a list was drawn up for everyone to take turns in tending the fire, for there were no more matchsticks left to kindle another.

One day Feuiaki and Viliami Fa, two of the crew, were returning with a handsome catch of fish. Suddenly to their horror they found that a shark was stealthily pursuing them. They offered the animal the whole lot of fish hoping that it will leave them in peace. But after consuming the fish it still hung around and was fast heading towards the two companions. Suddenly Feuiaki suffered from severe cramps and could no longer swim.



"Please proceed and leave me here to die," he said to his friend.

But Viliami Fa asked him to hang on, while he threw his spear at the animal with all his might. The weapon crashed onto the shark's head. Now it charged the two men with greater force and speed. Feuiaki, just managing to keep himself afloat, made a supreme effort and hurled his own spear. It got its mark and pierced through one of the shark's eyes. By then the others had come to their rescue and they managed to kill the animal and made a feast of it on the deck.

With the paint found in the wreck, several SOS messages were written on pieces of wood, fishing buoys and drums. One read, "**SOS 17 Men on Minerva Reef**" and the other, "**SOS Tuaikapau Minerva Reef**". They were all cast adrift on the sea. The stranded men earnestly hoped that someone would come across them and raise the alarm. They waited and waited. Days passed into weeks and weeks rolled into months. Yet there were no signs of any rescuers.

The seventeen brave men did not lose hope. They had faith and continued to pray, and found comfort in their prayers.

By and by many of them began to feel unwell. It was now becoming difficult to keep the fire going as the stock of firewood was slowly running out. The water from steaming was also getting scarce and was not enough to quench everyone's thirst. The captain soon realised that help might never come. He decided to build a boat, a small vessel to carry three handpicked men to the nearest island over 200 miles away. There they would try to seek help for the remaining colleagues.

It was remarkable how they went about with great ingenuity building a seaworthy boat with no proper materials and tools except a hammer. It looked like a miracle when the vessel stood ready to sail. They named it *Maloleili*, meaning Good Morning. So the captain,

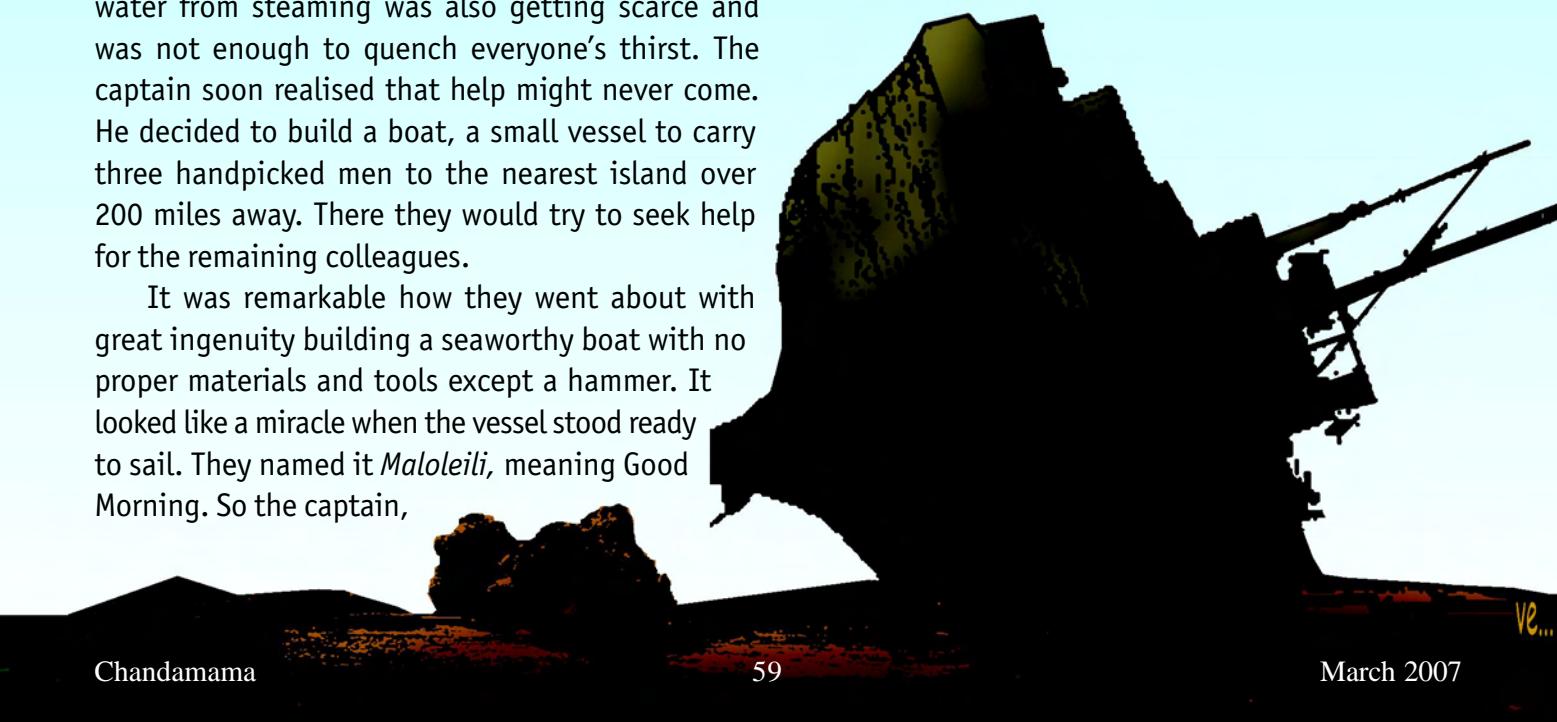
his son and another member set out on their rescue mission, risking their own lives. But before departure, Captain Fifita reminded the remaining men on the wreck to be calm and patient. In case nothing happened within fourteen days, they should assume them to be dead. Then they must themselves organise, if possible, other rescue operations.

For the next eleven days, there was no news. Everyone got anxious about the fate of the little boat and its three braver crew. Unfortunately, due to stormy weather and rough sea, the boat sank on the reef surrounding the island of Fiji. Captain Fifita's son was drowned in spite of his father's valiant effort to save him. So, the captain and his companion managed to swim ashore and raise the alarm. Lightning telegrams were sent to the capital of Fiji and to the Kingdom of Tonga.

Before long, an aeroplane rescued the rest of the brave adventurers from the Japanese wreck after 101 days of ordeal on the Minerva Reefs. Sadly, seven of the daring ones could not make it to the end.

This was one of the incredible tales of maritime survival in recent history. True, the men could not reach their destination. Yet, with a steady faith, simple courage and a constant prayer in their hearts they clung on to life when all seemed lost. At the end these brave ones won.

(AKD)



CHANDAMAMA INDIA QUIZ - 3

Co-sponsored by Infosys® FOUNDATION, Bangalore

*The questions this month are based on
India's 50-year fight for freedom leading to
Independence in 1947.*

What you should do: 1. Write down the answers; 2. Mention your name, age (you should be below 16), full postal address with PIN Code; 3. Mention your subscriber number, if you are a subscriber; 4. Write on the envelope **CHANDAMAMA INDIA QUIZ-3** with your complete address; 5. Mail your entry to reach us by March 31, 2007; 6. The answers will be published in the May 2007 issue.

AN
ALL-CORRECT
ENTRY WILL
FETCH A CASH
PRIZE OF
RS 250*

* If there are more than one all-correct entry, a lot will be taken to decide the prizewinner. However, the names of all those who have sent all-correct entries will be published.

1. Identify the three leaders of the freedom movement from their portraits. How were they popularly known as?
2. A political party which spearheaded the agitation against British rule, strangely, was founded by a Britisher. Who was he, and what was the party known as?
3. Bal Gangadhar Tilak is known for a momentous statement he made in the court room during his trial. What was the statement?
4. The annual session of the Indian National Congress held in 1929 is known for its historic decision. Where was it held? Who presided over the session? What was the decision?
5. Who was the first Indian woman to preside over the Indian National Congress?
6. A great personality in India was honoured by the British with a knighthood which entitled him to prefix his name with the word 'Sir'. However, he gave up the honour when he was vexed over the massacre of innocent people by the British soldiers. Who was this personality and what is the incident known as?
7. When was the tricolour accepted as the flag of the Congress party? What do the three colours denote? What was depicted on the middle band of white?
8. A popular children's book is titled "A Pinch of Salt Rocks the Empire". Which incident is alluded to here?



Garuda

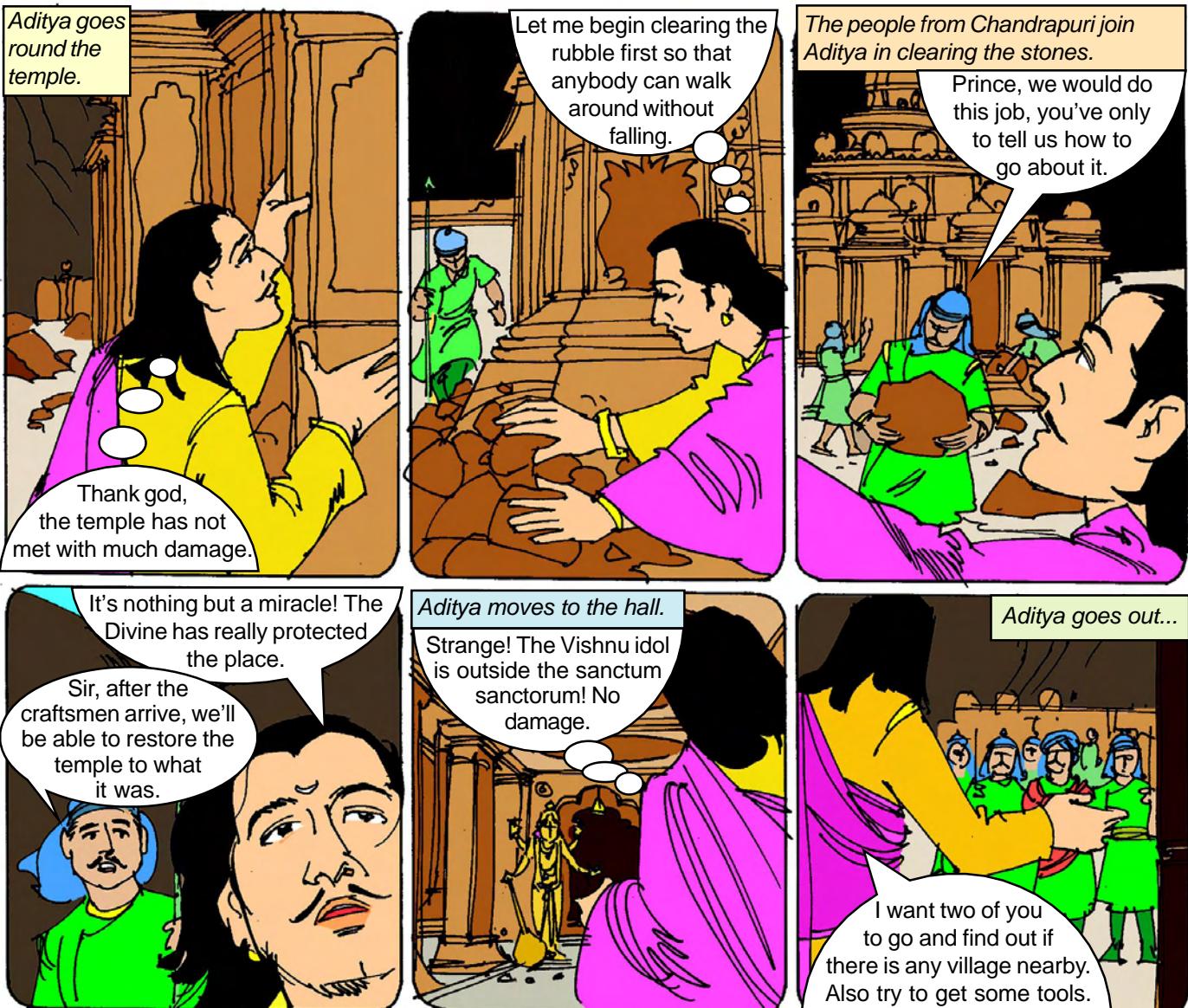
THE INVINCIBLE

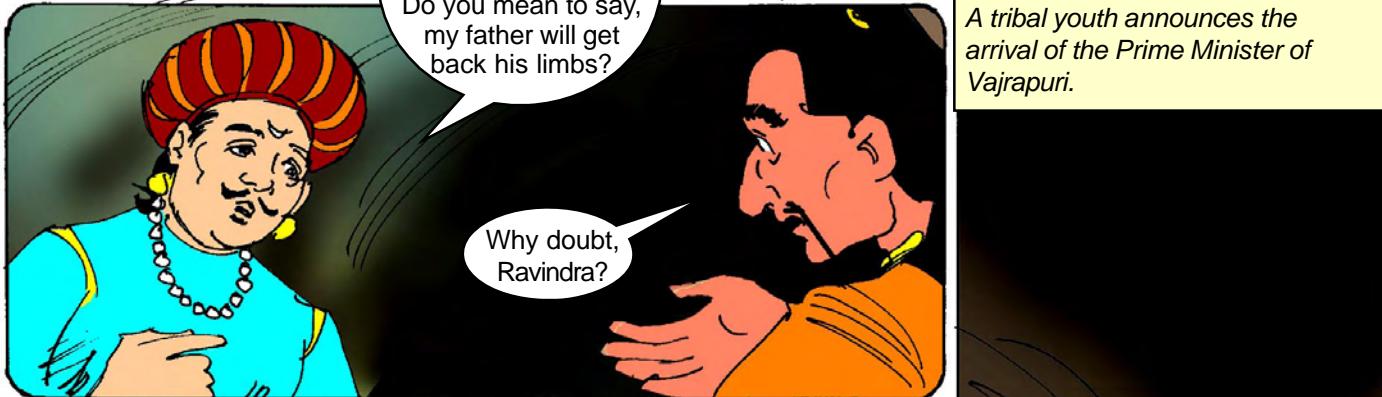
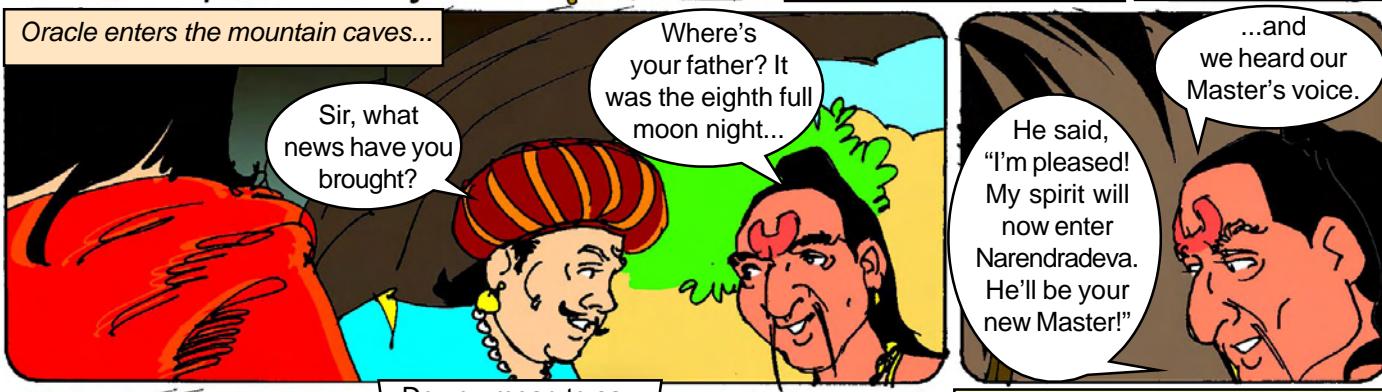
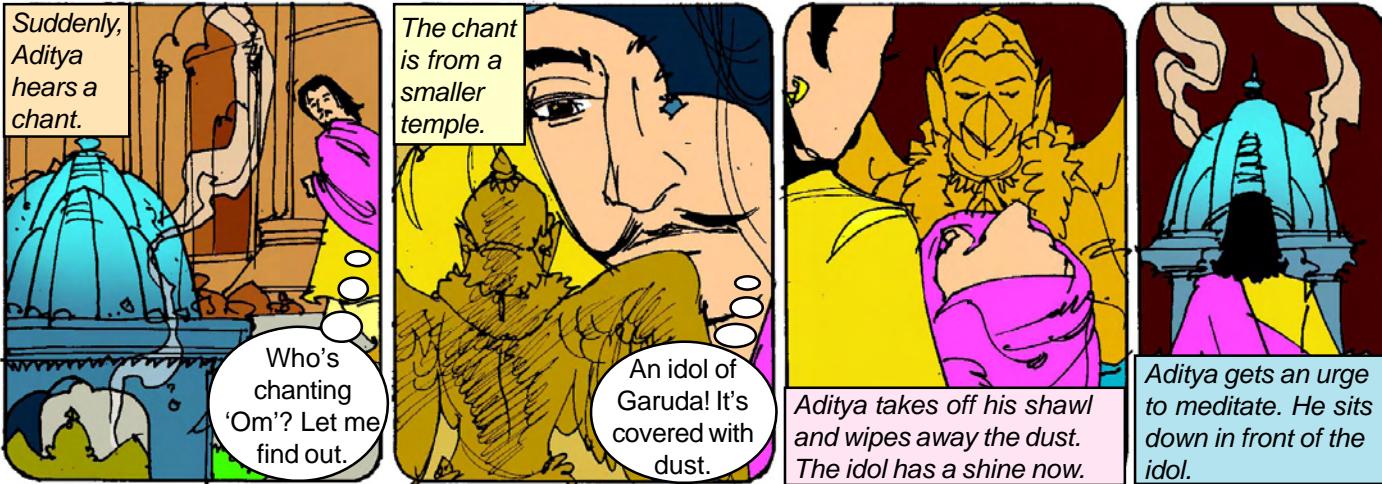
In Vajrapuri, after the banquet in his honour,

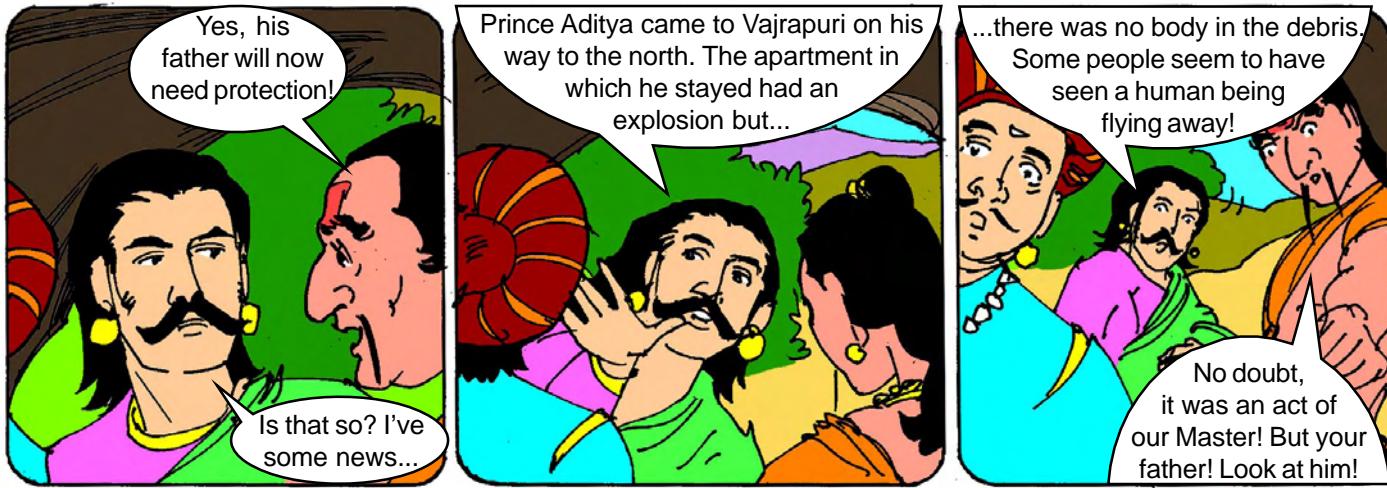
Aditya repairs to his apartments and goes to sleep.

On waking up, he misses his belongings, except the box with the feather and the idol of Garuda. He goes into a trance. There is an explosion. He is rescued by Garuda who takes him to the ruins.

Art : Gandhi Ayya









AN EXCLUSIVE WOMEN'S FESTIVAL

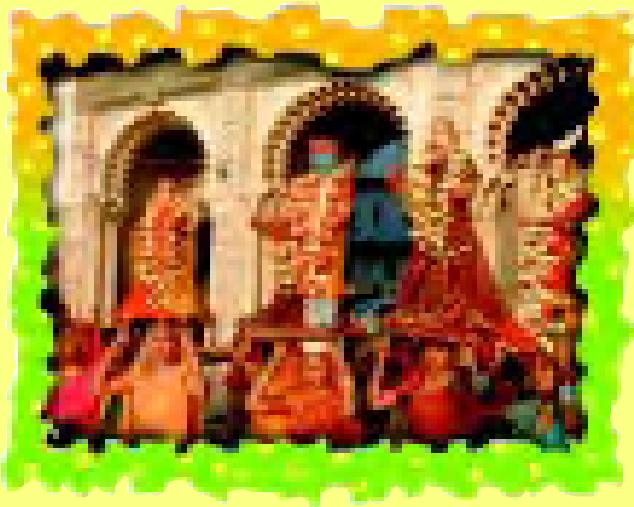
The Gangaur festival is the most important festival of Rajasthan. The word derives from *Gan*, which is another name of Lord Shiva, and *Gaur* or *Gauri*, the consort of the Lord who is more popularly known as Parvati. Thus Gangaur signifies

Shiva-Parvati as a blessed couple. The festival, which comes off after Holi, is celebrated by women for 18 days. Those unmarried will observe a fast on all days while they worship Gauri to bless them with husbands of their choice, and the married women seek in their prayers marital bliss and long lives for their husbands. They dress up in colourful attire on all days.

The festival is celebrated all over the State, especially in Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaisalmer. It is believed that Parvati returns to her parental home to bless her worshippers. On the 18th day, Lord Shiva goes and escorts her back to his abode. They are given a grand farewell.

The festival in Jaipur held in March-April has its own charm, as clay or wooden images of Gan and Gauri are taken in a colourful procession in which horses, elephants and palanquins participate. The idols are carried by married women on their heads. The procession is watched by thousands of people, including tourists.

In Udaipur, the idols are taken in boats in the Pichola Lake with a lot of gaiety.



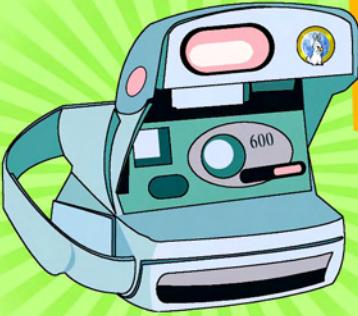


Photo Caption CONTEST

You may write it on a post card marking it:

**Photo Caption
Contest,
CHANDAMAMA**

and mail it to reach us before the 20th of the current month.

Can you write a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other?



NARAYANAMURTHY TATA



NARAYANAMURTHY TATA

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WINNING ENTRY

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MY NAME IS ENERGY

I am known as 'Energy'. I may be invisible to your eyes, but I am omnipresent as well as omnipotent. Scientists describe me as the capacity to do work. I have different forms, like thermal energy, electrical energy, and mechanical energy. I can easily change from one form to another. I have been created by Nature to serve mankind. I am proud that because of me, you are able to accomplish many of the tasks today. If you are leading a comfortable life, again it is because of me.

You are very much dependant on me for your day-to-day activities. It is no exaggeration if I say that without me things would come to a standstill. I am very happy to be at your service as long as I am gainfully utilised by you. However, I get annoyed when you tend to misuse me for wasteful practices.

For example, I feel unhappy when you forget to switch off the fans in your house when they are not in use. I am irked when you fail to switch off the lights in the kitchen or on the balcony at night before going to bed. I get irritated when someone switches on the AC unmindful of open windows. I am annoyed when a mischievous boy leaves the water tap open in his school. I am appalled at the sight of leakage of oils from machines at the workplace. I detest those workmen who leave their workplace without shutting off their machines. I abhor the employees in an office who keep their computers on even when not needed.

I would like to appeal to you not to indulge in wasteful practices. Such misuse might look insignificant if viewed individually. But when a large number of people indulge in such things, it results in a huge loss to the nation's economy. I advise you to start your conservation measures in your homes, to begin with. Then, follow it up in your schools and workplaces. Your attitude should be the same everywhere which would ultimately pave the way to the prosperity of your nation.



**Fans, cooler, A.C.
don't run without electricity,
so it is important to save
electricity also.**

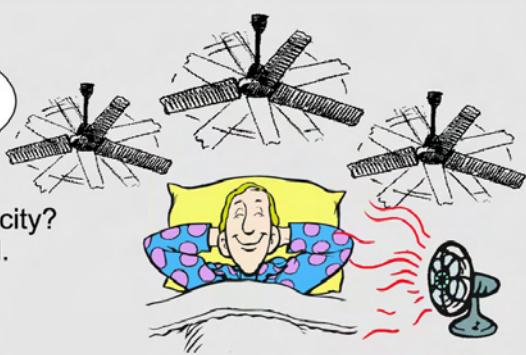
Do you know how difficult it is to generate electricity?
So, use electricity only as much as you need.



PETROLEUM CONSERVATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

10, Bhikaji Cama Place, New Delhi 110066.

E-mail : pcra@pcra.org



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